Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

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A hefty majority at First CRC Lethbridge vote to leave the CRC

Jake Kuiken and Bill Fledderus

LETHBRIDGE, Alta., and ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — In a vote which concluded on September 15, an overwhelming majority of the 455 members of the First Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge voted to secede from the Christian Reformed denomination.

The congregation, led by Rev. Jelle Tuininga, made the decision based on the belief that the Christian Reformed denomination is no longer a Bible-believing church and that the Lethbridge congregation would be better able to stay true to biblical teaching and avoid liberalism by following the leadership of its own pastor and consistory.

The charge of liberalism comes in the wake of the 1990 decision by the Synod of the CRC to open all offices to women and its 1991 report on creation and science.

According to Pete Brandsma, vice-president of the church council, the decision to leave "has been coming for a long time, five or 10 years already." With the decision already made, the act of secession should not take "very long at all — a matter of some weeks, or a month perhaps."

The assets of the congregation are yet to be divided between the seceders and the families who wish to remain in the CRC. By-law changes made at a congregational meeting earlier this year stipulate that in the case of a split, the majority of the congregation is to retain possession of the church assets. Both sides have consulted lawyers about how to proceed through the courts if that becomes necessary to protect their interests.

No reconciliation

At a September 10 emergency meeting, Classis Alberta South appealed to the council of First CRC Lethbridge for a slowdown in the secession process. That classis also appointed a five-person committee to attempt to work reconciliation between the seceders and those remaining, or, in the event secession proves unavoidable, to provide support and pastoral care to the 20 per cent who want to remain in the CRC.

In a related development, the council of Trinity CRC in St. Catharines has also decided to attempt to lead its congregation out of the CRC. Led by Rev. Calvin Tuininga, a cousin of the Lethbridge pastor, Trinity council voted on leaving the CRC this summer with 80 per cent in favour. The congregational vote is expected before October 15 with the official secession date set for November 3, 1991.

At its September 18 meeting, Classis Niagara called for a special October 3 meeting to consider the question: "Do the differences that we have constitute biblical, confessional and personal grounds for separation?"

— see page 13 for Jake Kuiken's report and evaluation of developments in Lethbridge —

Photo: anniversary book First Lethbridge CRC

A large congregation of 160 families spills over on to the sidewalk on Sundays.

Refugee backlog system is not working, say agencies

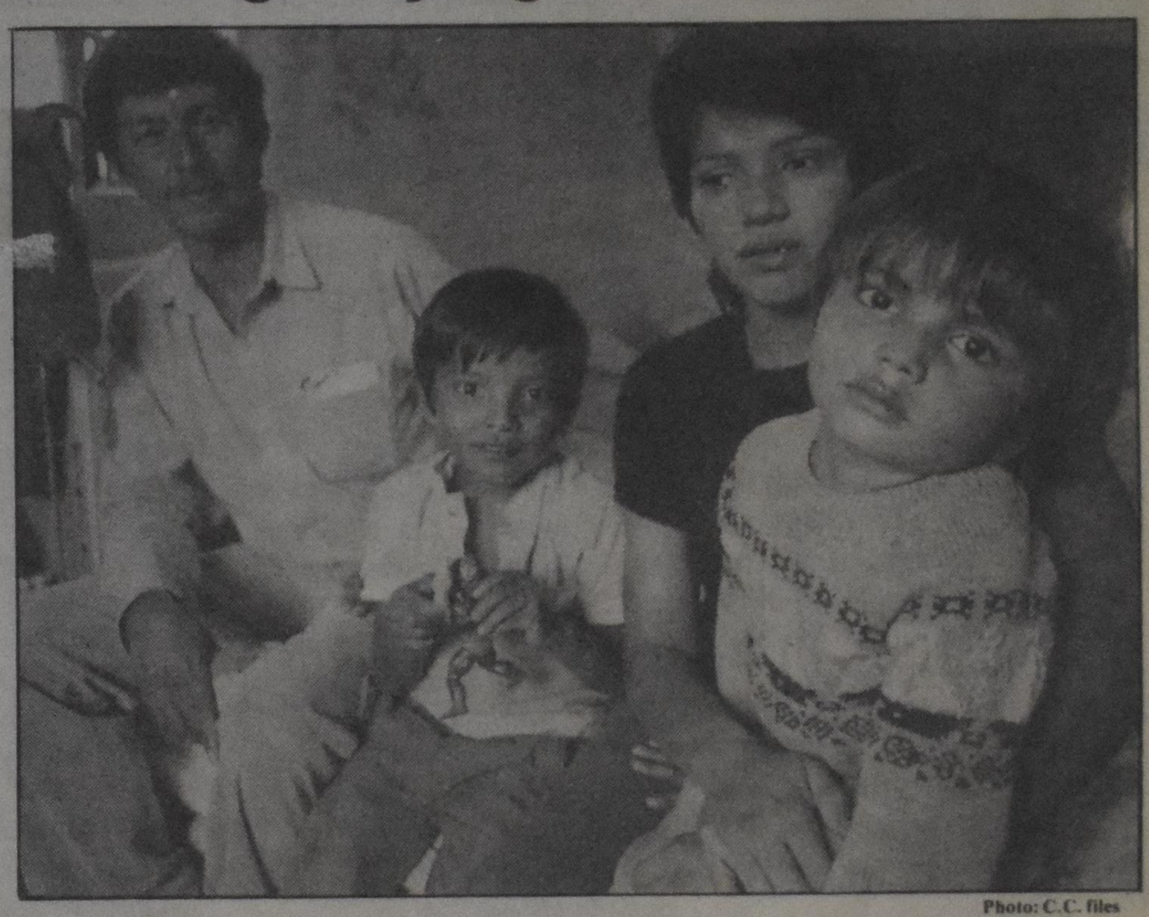

Photo: C.C. files

A Salvadoran family languishes in the limbo of non-status.

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Canada's refugee settlement system is unjust and cruel, say a number of refugee workers. According to them, the greatest problem right now is the huge backlog of refugees awaiting determination of their status.

One umbrella organization, the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR), sent a brief to the United Nations Human Rights Committee a year ago which said that "Canada's treatment of these people [more than 100,000 refugees caught in the refugee claimant backlog] is in direct violation of the International Covenant." That covenant seeks equality before courts and tribunals, protection of the family), protection without discrimination, and forbids cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Canada's system violates the covenant on all these points, says the brief.

The system isn't working

The present refugee determination system came into existence on January 1, 1989, when 95,000 uncompleted cases (representing more than 120,000 people) where channeled into a special process which was expected to clear the backlog in two years. Today, almost three years later, only 15,000 of these refugees have been "landed" so far, says George Cram, author of the brief and consultant to ICCR. "That is only 10 per cent. Fifty per cent have not even entered the process. Some of them have been in Canada as long as five or six years.

A parliamentary committee looking into the matter of refugee determination has estimated that the process will take six years instead of two, but refugee workers think that even that estimate is too optimistic.

According to Cram, the waiting refugees have no security and are often separated from their families. The ICCR brief documents serious stress disorders experienced by many of these refugees while they wait for the final determination of their status. The brief warns of suicidal tendencies. This year two refugees have committed suicide, says Cram.

What makes the system even more unfair is the fact that all refugees who came in 1990 have been cleared by the normal process of refugee determination. As a result, a Tamil who came to Canada from Sri Lanka on January 2, 1989, will have been processed, accepted and reunited with his family; while another Tamil, coming perhaps from the same village but a week earlier, may not yet have been called for his or her first interview.

The Inter-Church Committee for Refugees has called on the government to announce a general acceptance of all refugees caught in the backlog. (He avoids the term "amnesty" since coming to Canada as a refugee is not a crime). According to Cram, 80 per cent of those processed in the slow system are accepted anyway. These refugees have followed all the rules, yet they have been abused," says Cram. "We're destroying families."

Government failure

The Canadian Council for Refugees, a Montreal-based umbrella group of some 100 agencies, including the agencies belonging to ICCR, has endorsed the ICCR brief. Director Nancy Worsfold believes the government has failed in its refugee settlement program.

See **BACKLOG** -- p. 2.

Thinkbit:

"The woods would be silent if only the best birds sang."

On a billboard in Toronto

In this issue:

Bert Witvoet interviews the Reformed bishop of Budapest ..... pp. 10,11

Enjoy the poetry of Rev. Nick Vogelzang ..... p. 12

Jake Kuiken tells how First CRC of Lethbridge plans to leave the CRC ..... pp. 13,14

News

Interfaith group voices concern over constitution debate

Bill Fledderus

OTTAWA — A new group composed of Canadians from across the nation has emerged to add its voice to the discussion about Canada's constitution. The National Interfaith Working Group on Canada's Future is composed of approximately 45 individuals of various faiths and professions.

All of them are concerned about the way the constitutional debate will be conducted and stress the urgent need for patience and candid dialogue.

Archbishop E.W. Scott, a former Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, chairs the group. On Sept. 25, in response to the debate launched on the federal government's new constitutional package, he released an open letter on Canada's future, entitled "Let Us Lift Each Other Up."

The letter urges Canadians to listen carefully to each other and to governmental proposals, to listen without closing the debate prematurely and to be "genuinely open to change and to responsible solutions."

The letter also encourages Canadians to be creative, to speak out and to show mutual respect.

A Toronto member of the group, Gerald Vandezande, noted that he was glad that the vision statement, known as the "Canada clause," has been left open in the government's new proposal.

According to Vandezande, bureaucrats should not be asked to write a statement of vision for their country. Rather, it should be developed through input from people from across the nation.

He encourages Christians and Christian groups to enter the fray by submitting their vision to the parliamentary committee which has begun to hold hearings in Ottawa and will soon be criss-crossing the country.

The new package is a replacement for the failed Meech Lake Accord which was not ratified in time for a June 23, 1990, deadline.

Canada now has five months to debate the tentative constitutional revisions before they are converted into a final plan to be tabled in Parliament next spring.

Backlog program worse than prison

...continued from page 1.

She agrees with Cram that the backlog problem is grim. "Refugees left their country in a very difficult situation," she says. "The family left behind is often in a very unstable condition. With the husband gone there is no income. Sometimes children are left with grandparents and some of these grandparents have died in the meantime."

A further complication for waiting refugees is that their families are not allowed to even visit them. "Canada routinely restricts any family member from visiting a refugee claimant," says the ICCR brief. "The backlog program has been described by one claimant as worse than prison: at least in prison you are allowed family visits."

Recently a new practice has emerged, adds the brief. Regional offices have been instructed to take refugees who speak English first because they take less time. "The result is that English Caribbean applicants from Trinidad and Tobago, among the last to arrive in 1988...are being called in while the Salvadoran, Somalian and Sri Lankan claimants are having their hearings cancelled or postponed indefinitely."

Overbooking for interviews is a routine procedure, resulting in claimants having to wait for hours only to be told to come back another day.

The reason for the delays given by the government are administrative, says Worsfold. She believes the reasons, but she does not think that they constitute a valid excuse. "Justice delayed is justice denied," she says.

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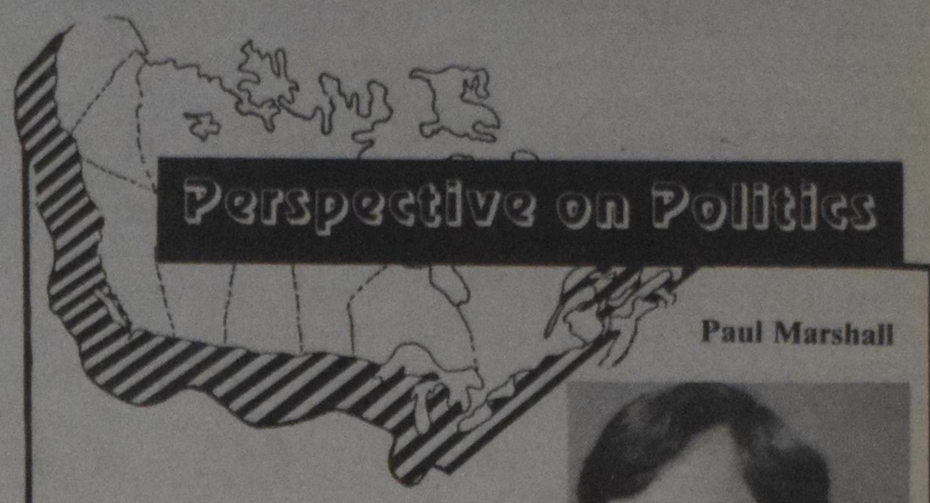
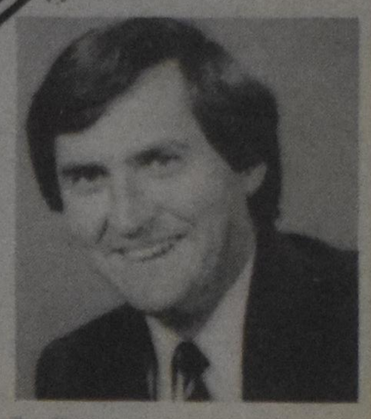


Paul Marshall



He's got the whole world in his hands

There were many good reasons to rejoice in the unification of Germany in the fall of last year (a year ago!). Apart from the obvious ones, I had a special reason of my own.

Erich Honecker, the former communist leader of East Germany, had vowed that the changes taking place in Poland and Czechoslovakia would *never* happen in his country. He said this in October 1989 (less than two years ago!). Shortly after his speech the country started falling apart around his ears. There was opposition and demonstrations. Other parties moved into government. The Communist Party collapsed. Honecker himself went into hiding and then into exile in the Soviet Union (which still existed way back then). The Berlin wall came down and East Germany began to integrate with the West.

My hope was that legal union would take place less than a year after Honecker's speech. This would be a testimony to the vanity of this (and our) political pretensions. There he had stood proclaiming that no change would happen. But before the first anniversary had passed not only he, not only his party, not only his government, but his very country had ceased to exist. How out of tune with the world, God's world, can one get?

There have been few times in world history when peaceful change has been so sweeping and so rapid. Germany even outpaced Poland and Czechoslovakia. I thought I would never see anything like it again, and so I wanted a clear deadline to remember it by.

A unique era

But the events in Germany pale beside what has happened in the U.S.S.R. in the last few weeks. A coup, resistance, and collapse. The virtual demise of the Communist Party and then of the Soviet Union itself. The Baltics are independent. The other republics have *de facto* independence. The KGB is being purged. Leningrad has once more become St. Petersburg. The world races on beyond anyone's planning: almost beyond anyone's hoping.

These changes are filled with hope, but also with danger. There may be civil war (as, in fact, there already is in the Caucarus region). There will be clashes over where the borders of the new republics should lie. There could be famine and there could be refugees. In the face of all the wondrous good news, we must recognize that the possibilities of war in Europe are greater than they have been for decades.

But in surveying these swift and vast changes, my feelings are often not so much fearful or hopeful as they are awful — in the literal sense of being filled with awe, wonder and surprise.

No one could predict it

Nobody (that I know of) foresaw these changes. Certainly no one consciously brought them into being and no one has directed them along paths pre-set by human plan. Even those most at the forefront, like Boris Yeltsin, have been carried along, as much passengers as drivers.

This world is not one that we can bend to our will or our whim. It is not one that we can predict and control. Our lives still do not lie ultimately in the hands of despots and dictators, nor presidents and prime ministers.

This is a theme that suffuses the Psalms:

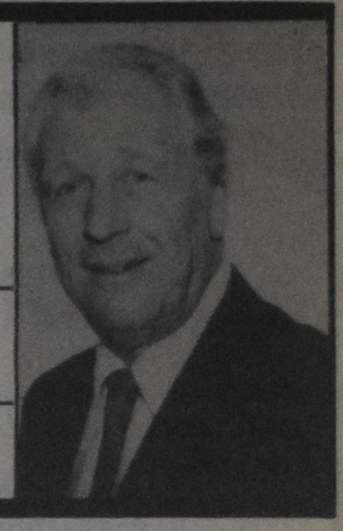
"...the Lord sits enthroned for ever,
he has established his throne for judgment;
and he judges the world with righteousness,
he judges the people with equity.

...let the nations be judged before you!
Put them in fear, O Lord!
Let the nations know that they are but men!
(Psalm 9: 7, 19, 20. See also Psalm 2, 7, 10).

Our world speaks to us and declares that it does not lie ensnared in the hands of its political leaders. It lies in God's hands. Hence, any politics that want to be rooted in reality must be rooted in faithfulness to God. Political security does not lie in our wit, wisdom or strength, but in God's mercy.

In 1991-92 Paul Marshall is the J. Omar Good Professor at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Penn.

Pressreview



Carl D. Tuyl

Here we go again: the constitutional concert will play repeat performances on the Canadian circuit. The package unveiled in the House of Commons (with even John Turner present on his bench) was received with lots of reservation. Somewhat like the reception of a door-knocking Jehova's Witness who comes calling during Sunday morning coffee. Frere Jacques Parizeau gave it thumbs down, but that was to be expected. The rejection of Chief Mercredi of the Assembly of First Nations was a bit more surprising, seeing that the government entrenched the right to Native self-government in the document. Whatever the outcome, it is certain that we shall engage in quite a bit of national navel-gazing during the next half year.

★ ★ ★

The shock of the week was the outcome of the New Brunswick elections, where an upshot anti-bilingual party won eight ridings and now forms the official opposition. Fortunately there is no danger to the province's official bilingualism; the Liberals hold 46 of the 58 seats in the provincial legislature. About 31 per cent of New Brunswick's 730,000 population are Francophone.

★ ★ ★

And while we're on the subject of shocks: there was this loving father who used to sing his children to sleep with lullabies. He abruptly stopped his singing when one night he overheard his four-year-old daughter say to her two-year-old brother: if you pretend to be asleep, he'll quit.

★ ★ ★

Agricultural ministers from Canada, the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean met in Spain, trying to find a solution to the war in agricultural subsidies between the United States and the European Community.

★ ★ ★

The birthrate in the Northwest Territories is now double the national average, with 27.7 births for every 1,000 residents. One in four of those babies is born to teenaged parents. Would it have anything to do with those long, dark and cold winter nights?

★ ★ ★

Our External Affairs Minister, Barbara McDougall, made a rookie appearance at the United Nations General Assembly. She delivered a revival call to the international community.

★ ★ ★

The B.C. Socreds are accident-prone. It's hard to keep track of party officials who had to resign. The latest is MLA Jack Kempf who has been charged with theft over a $1,000 and breach of trust. Premier Rita Johnson, driven to despair, is doing a half-hearted bit of NDP-bashing in her campaign, but I predict that British Columbia will be the next province with a socialist government.

★ ★ ★

Anything they can do in Toronto can be done in Ottawa. Bus drivers in the nation's capital are refusing to work overtime to protest their employer's latest contract offer, What's one strike more or less, eh? We have had mail delivery here already for a week, something we have to get used to.

★ ★ ★

There was a comic Nathan/David confrontation in the Ontario legislature. An opposition member asked the Minister of Community and Social Services what she thought about landlords charging too high rents. The minister, David-like, offered, not capital punishment, but very severe and indignant condemnation of such practice. Upon which the questioner, Nathan-like, pointed the finger at the minister and declared, "Thou art the woman." The minister, so the opposition members charged, was raking in exorbitant rents in the apartment buildings she owns. The following shouting match between the 20-member Tory caucus and government MPP's could be heard even by the hearing impaired on Vancouver Island.

★ ★ ★

Tough judges in Alberta! A 15-year old girl from Rocky Mountain House, who is in the despicable habit of skipping classes, was warned by a judge that she will go into the slammer if she doesn't comply with the court order to attend school. Now there's a novel approach to an old problem. It could pose problems for the Ministry of Education, though.

★ ★ ★

The country is breathlessly awaiting the release of John Sawatsky's biography of Monsieur. Judging from leaked segments, the book will not show our prime minister from his best side. Dirt sells, and there are always people willing to peddle dirt.

★ ★ ★

Saddam Hussein is playing chicken with the U.S. and Iraqi soldiers keeping a group of U.N. observers hostage. Could someone tell Hussein that he lost the war? The U.S./Israeli ten-billion-dollar stand-off also continues. Secretary Baker is losing hair trying to resolve that one. The Arab League met in Algiers, and despite PLO objections it seems that Palestinians are ready to come to the table. The PLO on the international scene is like a chess player who has just lost his queen in exchange for a pawn. Its disastrous support for Hussein left it isolated even among its earlier allies.

★ ★ ★

With the Soviet Union having gone the way of the Studebakers and five-cent-a-litre gasoline, Fidel Castro is beginning to feel a bit uneasy. Fidel hinted at the possibility of accepting investments from capitalist countries. What's this? Capitalists in Cuba? *Et tu*, Fidel?

★ ★ ★

Romanians went on the rampage in Bucharest protesting lack of democracy, lack of money and lack of sausages. The same thing happened in the former Soviet republic of Georgia where the political situation brought the country to the brink of civil war. Of course, civil war has been spreading its terror for weeks in Yugoslavia where Croats and Serbians and the central government keep waving flags, delivering patriotic speeches and killing each other. In Zaire's capital, soldiers rioted because they had not received their pay. Micah's prophecies of swords being beaten into plowshares still await their fulfilment. How long?

★ ★ ★

Since 1970 the U.S. and Canada have signed several agreements to clean up the Great Lakes. Not much has been done, however. Now the Great Lakes United and the Canadian Environmental Law Association want the United Nations to investigate whether those two countries have broken their promise to stop polluting the lakes.

★ ★ ★

Is there any good news at all? Of course there is. Public transport in Toronto was free for one day after it was invisible for a week. My cardiologist gave me good hope and the surgeon gave me a cortisone shot in my knee; now I can walk again.

★ ★ ★

Watch old Mother Nature put on a colour show: trees prettied up like Navy ships coming home, flags waving from bow to stern, colour co-ordinated vegetables, even. Get yourself some butternut squash for supper. Then you'll find out how good life can be. If only church budgets would show less red ink life would be almost perfect. Fall is a wonderful time.

★ ★ ★

Back to the news: peace might get a chance in El Salvador. The government and the guerrillas reached agreement on a proposal that could end the 12 year misery of civil war in that country. And the Japanese, not content with exporting automobiles and anything that can be plugged into electrical outlets, now also want to export their soldiers. The Japanese cabinet approved legislation that would allow Japan to send troops abroad. As far as I am concerned they can keep them at home, seeing what happened the last time they sent their troops abroad.

★ ★ ★

Time to sign off: be kind to each other; don't blame anyone for something you did, said or thought; keep the faith; and take your vitamins. Pay your minister a compliment; bring your spouse some flowers; give a buck to a panhandler. Send your aunt a card; call your parents; and treat yourself to a chocolate bar. It'll make you feel like a million dollars. Well, let's not exaggerate — like 50 bucks for sure.

Carl Tuyl is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplaincy co-ordinator.

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Editorial

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The dilemma of a declining readership

Yesterday there were about 25 Brock University students seated on the floor of our office for two-and-a-half hours. No, it was not a sit-in or protest; these students had come to hear us explain how a newspaper is put together. They were all foreign students who were taking English as a second language. They were going to produce their own in-house newspaper as part of an assignment and their instructor had decided that a visit to a small newspaper might be helpful.

The students had come prepared with questions, which they read to me. One question was: "How will you increase the readership of your paper?" Now that was a tough question. It's a question that has preoccupied our board of directors and our editorial advisory board for some years now. It's a thing that baffles me, too. How can we increase our readership?

I told the student that in our industry we have to come to the realization that the younger generation is less inclined to read serious material than the older generation was and is; that the younger generation is oriented more towards the visual, the sensual and the immediate. Some of the students shook their heads, as if to say, what a pity. You could tell that they themselves were serious students who valued good reading material. There wasn't much else I could say to them on the subject.

People who read

The topic came up again last night when the board of directors of *Calvinist Contact* met for their bi-annual meeting. "How can we change the wrong perception of young people that C.C. is just a paper for their parents and grandparents?" someone asked. "We should put out an issue for those people who don't read," someone suggested facetiously. "What kind of issue would that be?" someone wondered. "Twenty tabloid-sized blank pages?"

"I do not concern myself with people who don't read," I told the directors. "That's useless. What I'm interested in is reaching people who do read, but not us." I told them about a young woman who phoned me a week or so ago. "I have a confession to make," she said. "A few months ago we decided we had too many papers to read. We felt we had to drop one. So we dropped *Calvinist Contact*. But just the other day I was reading a few issues at my parents' place and I realized that we had been missing some very good articles. So I am re-subscribing."

"It's people like that I'm concerned about," I said to the directors. "We were fortunate to get this one back; but how easy it is for people to overlook the value of a Christian weekly. We could be standing on our heads and producing the most valuable articles, only to have people pass us by because they are too preoccupied with other things."

Apathy of distraction

That preoccupation is really what is killing so many good things in life. People are sidetracked; people are caught up in all kinds of things that have no true spiritual value. It's the one thing that makes life for people who have vision difficult: the apathy of busy and excited people without vision.

I am not saying that Christians must read *Calvinist Contact*. But I am saying that Christians must read several Christian magazines to stay awake. The total picture of the industry of Christian papers is that, although by all accounts the Christian press has become a respectable and worthwhile source of information and comment, the Christian readership of all these papers is dwindling.

It's ironic: as we get better it gets harder to attract readers. Today no paper can any longer count on denominational or ethnic loyalty. And that in itself is a good thing. The Christian press coasted along too comfortably in the past. It now has to work very hard to even maintain its present readership base. But it would be nice to know that there was a fair return of reader interest after a hard day's work.

Are some of our problems related to a declining economy? I don't think so. The pattern of a declining readership has been there even through the best of times.

A question of priority

What can we do? All of us can do *something*; none of us can do everything. All of us can challenge people to read. All of us can help make our community more aware through discussion, and make it more vital through reading and sharing. All of us can shake off the lethargy that so easily besets a consumer society.

Did you know that some people would not think twice about purchasing an $80 ticket to "Phantom of the Opera" but find half of that price too much for a paper that would come into their home 47 times for a whole year? Don't believe the excuses of no money and no time. It's a question of priority. It always has been. And in the meantime lazy Christians sit back and lament the awful conditions in the world.

Let me end with two quotations from *The Dilemmas of Journalism* to challenge both those who write for C.C. and those who read what we have written.

For the readers: "It is up to Christian people not to sit back complaining that good news never comes. It is for Christian people to rise up and make, utter, do that good news, to make use of the media and befriend those who work in them."

For the writers: "The beginning of a Christian understanding of journalism is that the truth is very much more than the obvious facts, and that even those are not so easily come by. I call this a Christian understanding because I believe it reflects the approach of Jesus himself. Throughout the New Testament we find him slow to rush to the obvious conclusion, or to condemn, and painstaking in listening to other people's point of view. He constantly rejected stereotypes, making friends of publicans and sinners, even taking seriously a centurion of the occupying forces and resisting easy, vote-catching lines of appeal."

Together we can make Christian journalism work.

BW

Letter

All of us, including homosexuals, must repent, not remain 'As We ARE'

I am writing concerning an ad in the personal column of C.C., Sept. 6: "AWARE (As We ARE), a gay and lesbian support group for those within or with roots in the CRC, etc....." I was shocked that *Calvinist Contact*, a so called "Christian" paper would carry ads such as this.

I have always been taught that "I must know how great my sin and misery are, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery and how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance." In the light of the Scripture I learn that God does not desire the gay/lesbian lifestyle. In that ad I do not read anything about the struggle with or repentance from such a sin. Instead, I'm led to think this is accept(able): "as we are."

This acceptance and lifestyle is a result of sin. In Romans I: 24-27 I read: "Therefore God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts, to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations with unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."

Paul continues in Romans 6:20: "Where sin increased, grace increased the more." Paul teaches us to be dead to sin. Romans 6:1 says: "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that that grace may increase? By no means. We died to sin — how can we live in it any longer?"

We do not remain "as we are." We are all sinners who stand in the need of forgiveness. "We know that our old self was crucified with (Christ) so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6: 6-7). That grace Paul speaks about is only for those who repent and are sorry for their sins.

Alice Pool
Wyoming, Ont.

Should C.C. refuse advertising to AWARE?

An editorial response to a reader's letter

We have seriously considered the letter sent to us by Alice Pool of Wyoming, Ont. We have asked ourselves if our advertising policy has been compromised by the personal advertisement placed by the AWARE group of London, Ont. Our advertising policy is that we do not accept advertising that is in conflict with the will of God and the editorial policy of our paper.

We have also considered the fact that the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and the Ontario Human Rights Code forbid us to discriminate in our advertising policy on the basis of race, colour, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, creed, family status, sex (includes gender and sexual orientation), marital status, age, handicap and record of offences.

To begin with, what this human rights code implies, for example, is that we may not deny a person our services if the basis of our denial is that person's sexual orientation. In other words, if a homosexual person wants to place an ad in our paper in which he or she offers a home for sale or looks for a job, we may not refuse such an ad on the basis of his or her sexual orientation. However, we may deny advertising to persons or a group of persons if they want to use our paper to propagate or promote a way of life or ideas that are in conflict with our stated aims, which are summarized in our motto: "An independent Christian weekly that seeks to proclaim the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ."

According to a spokesperson at the Canadian Advertising Foundation, there has been only one Supreme Court ruling on this matter in response to a complaint against the *Vancouver Sun* which refused to place an advertisement by a gay rights group. The ruling was that a newspaper has the right to refuse or accept advertising.

We could as a paper simply refuse advertising without giving a reason. In fact, the spokesperson at Canadian Advertising Foundation suggested that, if we wanted to refuse advertising, our reason not be stated so that the possibility of a court challenge be reduced. This is, however, not the approach we would like to take. We want to be open and honest with our constituency.

The question we at *Calvinist Contact* want to ask, therefore, is the following: is AWARE a support group for homosexual Christians that upholds the work of Christ or does it promote ideas and practices that are in direct conflict with the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ as this newspaper understands it?

Unconditional love

On the surface, AWARE is simply a support group for gays and lesbians within the Christian Reformed Church. The name AWARE is an abbreviated form of the phrase "As We Are." We could take this to mean that people are accepted "as they are," not to be confused with "for what they do." ("Accept the sinner, not the sin.") But whether this is the kind of meaning members of AWARE attach to the name is doubtful.

Christians are always called upon to accept other people as they are. We practise unconditional love because God practises unconditional love. Christ died for us while we were still sinners, not after we cleaned up our act.

In addition, our editorial stance has for the past years been that homosexual orientation as such is not the sin, it is rather an aberration or curse which falls on a certain segment of the population because of the presence of sin in society. For that reason, we do not feel that a support group for lesbians and gays is necessarily in conflict with the aims of our weekly paper. In fact, the care of Jesus Christ must find expression in the form of support groups, also for homosexuals.

No official view

But if we go a little deeper into what AWARE really is as we know it, is it then just a support group or does it espouse ideas and practices that are in conflict with the will of God as we understand it? There are no formal statements to help us here. Spokespersons for AWARE have always told us that there is no policy, for example, on the question of whether or not same-sex relationships are allowed. We do know that several members, even leaders, hold the view that same-sex relationships are allowed provided they meet the same standards set for heterosexual relations, namely monogamy. But is is not the official view of AWARE.

We do feel a great deal of discomfort with the fact that AWARE does not

continued on page 6...

BEYOND BELIEF

CHURCH WORK DAY
THIS SATURDAY
9AM - 4PM
"pitch in & serve"
I HAVE A BURNING DESIRE TO BE A SERVANT OF OUR LORD...
AND IT LASTS RIGHT UP UNTIL SOMEONE STARTS TREATING ME LIKE ONE.
4-16
© MIKE ROGER 1991

News digest

SYDNEY, Australia (EP) — On Sept. 1, 42 children from Chernobyl visited Trinity Grammar School in Sydney, Australia, for a cross-cultural experience in which the children mixed with one another and exchanged gifts. Each of the children, victims of the nuclear meltdown incident at Chernobyl which exposed thousands to massive doses of radiation, received a "sample bag full of goodies," according to a school spokesperson. The bags contained trinkets, toys, and hardback copies of the New Testament in Russian provided by the Bible Society of New South Wales. While McDonalds provided food for the day's event, the Bible Society provided food for the soul, said the spokesperson.

WINNIPEG, Man. (MCC) — Home-made quilts for people who have AIDS, prison visitation ministries, programs for single mothers and families in crisis, youth work in Native communities, assistance for community food banks — these are just a few of the ways Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) tries to meet needs here in Canada.

There are over 80 programs, representing 25 to 30 different kinds of services, operated or supported by MCC in Canada today. Around 150 volunteers serve with MCC in Canada.

In his 1989 review of MCC in Canada, Reg Toews, formerly associate executive secretary of MCC, analyzed how the organization gets involved in responding to needs. "MCC does not identify need in the abstract or from a purely analytical examination of the data," he wrote. "That is not to say that there is no interest in hard data but that MCC relies more on the identification of need by individuals reporting on their own experience or their observation of the experience of others."

In other words, MCC's programs in Canada often are the result of direct calls for action from supporters. This rootedness is a strength, but it also requires MCC to carefully weigh the many calls for assistance — at home and overseas. It is proving to be a very challenging task.

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (NNI) — The Protestant evangelical mission SIM International has announced that it will resume broadcasting Christian programming in Liberia in October, with approximately six hours of English-language broadcasts daily on a small FM transmitter.

Prior to the complete destruction of Radio ELWA, the station had provided 37 years of uninterrupted service with broadcasts in more than 40 languages to west, central and north Africa.

SIM evacuated all mission personnel from Liberia in July 1990, but staffers began returning in early 1991.

According to Stan Bruning, SIM International radio co-ordinator, "Once the FM radio station is operational, we will begin immediately working on phase two of the restoration project. That will provide a 10,000 watt short wave transmitter which will provide coverage to the remainder of Liberia and the neighbouring countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

BUNTING: An opinion

Nick Overduin

As penant fever arrives again, I want to ask something I have often wondered about: How come not every baseball player can bunt?

Announcers are constantly making excuses: "He can't bunt, he's a home run hitter"; "he's the clean-up batter, so it would be too much to expect real success with the bunt"; "he's been used only sparingly of late, so it's hard to come into a ball game and lay down a good bunt."

I don't understand it, What seems to be the problem? It seems to me that all professional ball players ought to be able to bunt. And if they can't, why don't they start practising, say, for two hours a day. They make good money. Is two hours devoted to bunting too much to ask?

Just imagine the explosive offense a team would muster if every member could be relied on to lay down a perfect bunt at any time. Try a bunt with the bases loaded and nobody out; or a bunt combined with a double steal.

The bunt should be a consistent part of the team's arsenal. Its shock value is inestimable. It draws in the infield. It worries the pitcher. It reduces the overall significance of curve-balls versus fastballs.

If everybody *could* bunt, the very *threat* of bunting could wreak havoc with the opposition. (What if he *bunts*?!)

The bunts we actually do see nowadays are so boringly predictable: advance the man to second — the batter's out at first. Advance the man to third with one out so that a fly ball will get him home: How exciting! How inspiring!

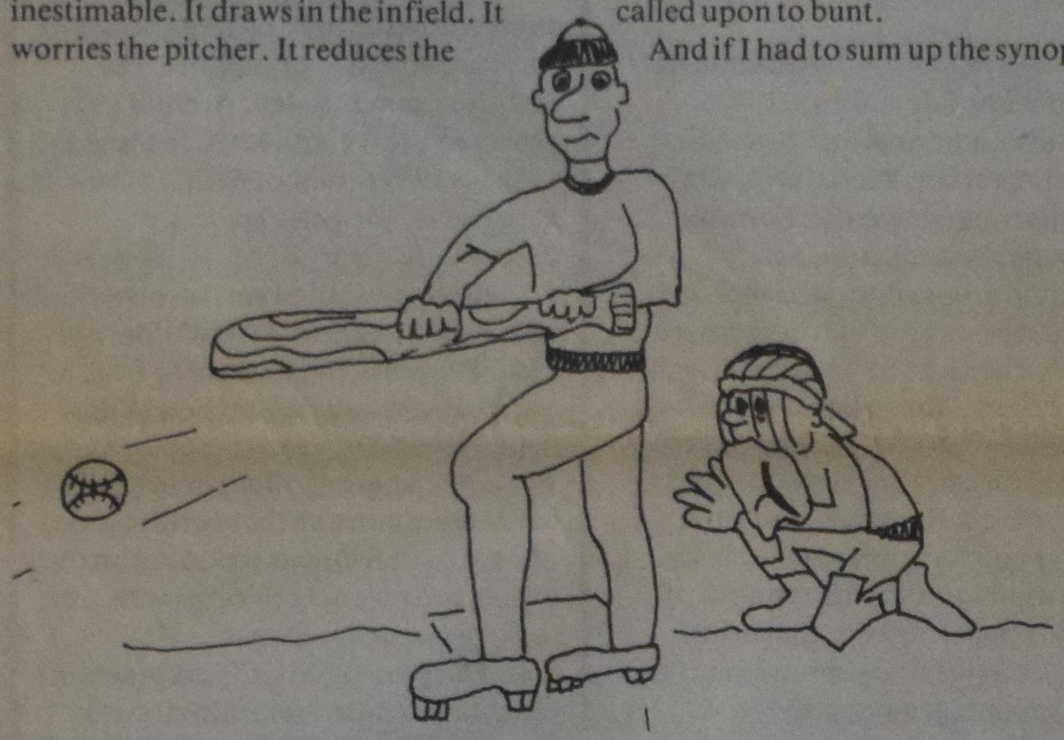
A golden bat

Bunting should be as natural as catching a baseball. Failure to execute the bunt should be considered an error. People with perfect bunting records should be given a golden bat.

What bunting especially illustrates is the team nature of baseball. The bunting hero is not out to increase his batting average but, rather, sacrifices himself to advance the team. And if *everyone* could bunt, the team could rally around this loose canon, this ace up the team's sleeve.

This is what life is like. We are often called upon to bunt.

And if I had to sum up the synoptic gospels, this is what I would say: Someone bunted us home but was out at first. A review of the tapes three days later determined he was safe. Victory celebrations ensued.



Nick Overduin is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont.

An editorial response to a reader's letter

...continued from page 5

clearly spell out what its views on this matter are. As such it does not place itself under the official pronouncements of the 1973 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, for example, which forbids the practice of homosexuality. As far as we know none of the chapters of AWARE (Toronto, Edmonton, London) have placed themselves under the supervision of a local church council. Nor do they themselves exercise discipline among their members when some of them live together in a homosexual relationship.

On the other hand, we do not want to to underestimate the difficulties surrounding a ministry to gays and lesbians and the need for it. AWARE groups offer care and support and seek to keep their members from falling into horrible bouts of depression and/or hopeless promiscuous relationships that a lone homosexual person may find him or herself in when there is no tangible support. It must be said that most churches are not very helpful in this regard. In fact, many churches make life most difficult for their homosexual members because there is either total neglect, based often on lack of awareness, or a preoccupation with the orientation itself or an unholy concern to be pure at the expense of love and care.

Taking all these factors into account, we have decided, that we will postpone our decision on this matter for now, lest we find ourselves being too preoccupied with purity and not enough with care. We have heard enough statements from leaders in AWARE, however, to believe that their *modus operandi* is in conflict with our editorial stance. If there is no change in that we will in the future no longer accept advertising from this organization unless it openly declares that the practice of homosexuality is sinful and until it urges chastity on its members, declaring that sexual intercourse is permitted only within a heterosexual marriage. We call on AWARE to uphold the norm of abstinence for its members, without judging those who have not yet achieved that.

We urge local councils to engage the AWARE groups in their midst and to press for a more clear statement on the direction of this ministry so that God's will for human life may be upheld and practised more and more. We urge all Christians to pray for and work with their homosexual brothers and sisters in an attitude of humility, acceptance and obedience.

Bert Witvoet,
Editor

ROOFTOP MUSINGS/ALYCE OOSTERHUIS

Walking in the Sonlight

A new Calvinette year has begun with its theme of "Walking in the Sonlight." The Ontario Christian School Teachers Association Convention in October has as its theme: "Find us Faithful." The King's College chapel committee has declared that the fall theme will be "We are a Community." The 1992 International Conference on Christian Education has "Focusing the Vision" as its theme.

Themes for conferences, workshops, courses and church events serve to provide an organizational network for all that is included in developing the theme. When themes are started in strikingly simple phrases they also serve to aid as memory markers. "Remember the 1990 convention year? That was the year of..."

We use the theme as the mnemonic device to retrieve the messages we heard in various workshops and lectures (much like ministers in the past used to have mnemonic devices for their three-point sermons, each point beginning with the same letter). Many of the themes are also inspirational and after we have participated in the various events we return home, determined to keep the theme alive in our hearts and minds.

Shift toward personal piety

In the last few years I have, however, noticed an organizational shift in the development of themes. The focus of many church-related events, regardless of theme, tends to be that of singing and talking about Jesus. But in the content of the songs and the conversations there seems to be little beyond the Jesus who is our Saviour, our Friend, our Love. There has been an increase in pious expressions which, prior to the last decade, were not too prevalent in Reformed circles. We tended to see ourselves as more head- than heart-oriented, especially when it came to public expressions of our faith and walk with Christ. Hence the increase in public piety and heart-sharing can be applauded as a welcome gift from one extreme to another. But as the pendulum of faith expressions shifts, we would do well not to lose the contents of the thoughts and actions which filled our heads and hands.

I have always been a proponent of the "integrated day" in the school classroom, where the chosen topic for the week or month is the focus of the elementary child's reading, writing, music, art and other activities. What we need in the various church and convention themes are activities, songs, readings and games that develop these themes in depth. Thus when the theme focuses on Jesus the Saviour, the Friend, the One we Love, our children, our students and we ourselves need to be challenged with activities and ideas that go beyond the sung and spoken words. Christ did not limit his ministry to sermons on mountain tops. He lived, healed, admonished, prayed, suffered, (did he ever laugh?) and inspired. His followers continued his lifestyle, preaching, teaching and practising.

Integration

"Walking in the Sonlight" is a challenging theme for young girls playing, working and learning together for two hours a week in a church annex. It will be a challenge for the counsellors to find crafts that can develop that theme, (especially when many of the girls are too young to do much with stained glasswork — one art activity that springs to mind) *and* then to do with those crafts that which would be consistent with the action of giving implied in "walking as he walked." It is a challenge that is not limited to a Calvinette organization. For each one of us there is a challenge to work out in our own lives the integration of our faith in all our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Whether we are focusing our vision or being a community or just living from day to day, the challenge of being Christians is to follow his modelling in all aspects of our lives.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis is assistant professor of educational psychology at The King's College in Edmonton.

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

Dead Again

Rated **AA**
Stars Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson, Derek Jacobi, Andy Garcia, Hanna Schygulla
Directed by Kenneth Branagh

I don't usually go to movies with titles like "Dead Again." I've learned it's safe to assume that most such pictures are B-grade horror movies, replete with bad acting, blood, guts and mutilation, all explained by some hokey understanding of the "supernatural" or the occult — none of which makes for subtle, quality entertainment, much less art.

But the director-star of this film, with his sterling reputation as a classically trained stage actor and with an exceptional version of Shakespeare's *Henry V* under his belt as his first film, makes the difference here; as do the other Shakespearean actors who appear.

Kenneth Branagh wanted to do something entirely different, and that he has. This film isn't great art and Branagh isn't under the illusion that it is. But it was something which he admits he had fun doing, and that shows.

Dead Again is a gothic thriller complete with old stone mansions, crackling thunderstorms, a crime of passion, a possible "reincarnation" and diverse characters in two times and places.

Branagh and his wife, Emma Thompson, each play two roles: he's a German composer, Roman Strauss; she's his English wife, Margaret. Branagh is also a low-keyed Los Angeles detective named Mike Church; Thompson is particularly adept in her second role as an amnesia victim whom the detective calls "Grace," and whose identity Mike is asked to discover.

Trouble in paradise?

The Strauss' moved to Los Angeles after World War II, along with Roman's overly protective housekeeper and her strangely troubled son. The Strauss' seemed secure in their marriage and their new life; but then in 1948 Roman is convicted of and executed for Margaret's murder.

Meanwhile, in the present, Grace has blood-curdling nightmares about someone trying to stab her with scissors. Through the help of an eccentric antique dealer who is obsessed with reincarnation and hypnosis, Grace learns (through hypnosis) that the would-be killer troubling her dreams appears to be Roman Strauss — which may mean that Grace has some connection to Margaret Strauss.

As in most good films of this genre, all things are not as they seem, which of course adds suspense and several eyebrow-raising surprises.

From a technical point of view, *Dead Again* is a fine film. The 1940s flashbacks, shot in black-and-white, are skillfully integrated into the present-day story. The camera work is artful, with specific camera angles often heightening the film's charged atmosphere. The acting and American accents by Branagh and Thompson are consistently good, as is the acting of Derek Jacobi, another high-profile British stage actor. Robin Williams is effective when he turns up in an un-billed role as a slightly deranged (and gratuitously foul-mouthed) psychiatrist. Andy Garcia, however, has perhaps appeared in too many Mafia movies and looks far too swarthy to be really effective as Gray Baker, the WASP reporter who got to know the Strausses and who wrote about the murder.

Not profound

A Christian analysis of the content or message of a film like this is a little trickier than looking at it technically. Murder, reincarnation and various mental disturbances aren't particularly edifying subjects. But they are not portrayed as such by the film. Nor do the forces of evil win out in the end.

This film should be seen basically as a suspenseful puzzle which viewers can try to solve alongside some of the key characters — like an updated Agatha Christie or Sherlock Holmes mystery — rather than as a story that is trying to get across a message or make a moral point of some kind. As a murder mystery it works very well. Assigning it any profundity beyond that would be unjustified.

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

It seems fathers can do no good. If dad doesn't bring home enough bacon for every last wish of his family he's a poor provider, and if he does he's a materialist and spends insufficient time with the family. If he serves on the church council or a committee he ignores his family. The idea is that mother should work and serve there; then we can keep up with society and turn out latch-key kids. If fathers break down, cry and share their inmost faith and fears, their minds and manhood are suspect; whereas if they don't, they have failed to communicate their convictions.

Why is it that if fathers learn from Eli and Proverbs not to spare the rod they erroneously "control" and provoke their children if not assault them, whereas if they withdraw from this responsibility they lazily leave the raising of children to moms?

Why is it so splendid that the Committee for Women in the CRC has already disbursed $22,000 to 22 worthy females, while if men did the same for men they would be accused of the rankest discrimination?

Has it crossed anyone's mind that the contradictory advice fathers receive in our circles and the prevalent idolization of women and the feminist movement is neutering fathers' effectiveness and quickly driving the youth either into the world or into more conservative evangelical circles?

Dear Can Do No Good:

Poor Provider versus Materialist; Absentee-Father versus Controlling Disciplinarian; and Sensitive Man versus Silent Male. These extreme stereotypes don't ring true despite containing some kernels of truth. Such caricatures of masculinity allow you to express your frustration but are not helpful for understanding ourselves or the opposite sex.

There is no need to be so defensive about men and so resentful of women. Jesus showed us that it's possible for males to cry and laugh. He counted both men and women as intimate friends and fellow workers in his Kingdom. He invites both sexes into the experience of being fully human and hinges that possibility on a simple command: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Your anger needs to be expressed and addressed. Your letter is a beginning. We hope that you will follow this up by seeking out a pastor or a Christian counselor who will help you understand why you feel so threatened. As your self-confidence grows your frustration will diminish.

Gordon Dalbey's book *Healing the Masculine Soul* is a good place to start. This pastor and teacher avoids both male and female bashing as he works out a biblical view of masculinity. Available at any Christian book store, this book brings your stereotypical extremes into biblical balance.

It is true that the Committee for Women in the Chr. Ref. Church (CW-CRC), has awarded 22 scholarships for female seminarians studying at Calvin Theological Seminary or Western Seminary in Holland, Mich. These students are preparing themselves for a variety of ministerial tasks, including missions, pastor counselling, Bible translation and church education. This scholarship program is in keeping with the CW-CRC's purpose: "To encourage qualified women to develop leadership skills in the ministries of the Chr. Ref. Church."

It needs to be noted that, in fact, men have been financially supporting other men for years. It happens annually when classical delegates discuss the Fund for Needy Students and distribute an average of $3,000 per year to (male) seminary applicants. We have yet to hear anyone accuse a classis of rank discrimination because of this longstanding practice.

Dear P & M:

I have noticed that the church has a hard time admitting that wife abuse is a reality among us. From experience I can tell you that it's not just "out there"; it happens "in here" too. The sooner church members acknowledge this fact, the sooner they will be able to reach out to an abused person when she brings it out in the open. In the meantime, I'm afraid that most people minimize it, ignore it and pretend it doesn't exist in the hope that this problem will go away.

I've also noticed that we just don't know what to say when any kind of tragedy strikes us. Fellow church members are quick to share happy moments with one another. But we can't share pain, grief and anger because these emotions make us feel uncomfortable and inadequate. Those who are hurting are, consequently, ignored and effectively isolated. This doubles their pain. How sad when you consider that the church is supposed to be in the business of helping hurting people!

Dear Double Pain;

It takes a fellow sufferer to empathize fully. Unfortunately many of us will need to experience some personal tragedy or failure in our own lifes before we can truly understand what another hurting person feels. Those of us who have been wounded by life's evils also need to feel safe enough to confide our pain. May God continue to prod all of us to be a healing church community, also through letters from readers like you. Surely we can learn to be vulnerable in each other's presence!

Write to: P&M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam DaSilva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Billy Graham message of peace broadcast in crusade programs on South African television

NEW YORK, N.Y., (BGEA) — Two major telecasts featuring Billy Graham including a 10-minute personal message on "peace" by the evangelist were broadcast Sunday, Sept. 15 and Sept. 22, by the South African Broadcasting Company on the black, white and Afrikaans channels.

The timing of Graham's crusade telecasts and message on peace came immediately following the National Peace Convention spearheaded by President F.W. de Klerk, Dr. Nelson Mandela, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and other political leaders.

At the convention, the South African government and the two main rival black groups — the African National Congress and the Inkatha movement — reached for the first time in history an agreement on a comprehensive peace plan designed to facilitate peace and reduce black factional violence. These political leaders joined 20 other smaller anti-apartheid groups, including the South African Communist Party, in signing the historic peace accord.

The problem is the human heart

"Right now a new South Africa is being born," Graham said in a special message to the South African people. "I know, however, that in some ways you are still in the midst of the birth pangs, and many of you certainly live under the dark shadow of fear and violence."

"People often ask me why there is so much violence in the world," he continued. "Although South Africa has been in the headlines, you are by no means alone in facing violence. At this moment, literally dozens of countries are wracked by warfare and conflict. In my own country we have had over 25,000 murders since the beginning of the year — a terrible toll."

Graham said this violence stems not only from social, economic, political or legal problems, but problems of the human heart. "As hard as it may be for us to admit it to ourselves, injustice, prejustice, violence and hatred all come ultimately from within us — from our hearts and our minds. But, it doesn't have to be that way, and the reason is because God loves us and he wants to change our hearts. The Bible says there can be peace."

Graham further emphasized three kinds of peace: the peace of human beings with God; the peace of God in the human heart and peace we can have with each other. "My prayer is that South Africa would become an example and a role model to the rest of the world. You can lead the way to justice, and love and forgiveness."

The whole country watching

Graham's message was aired twice previously on the evening of Sept. 9, on the 7:00 p.m. news bulletin telecast mostly to black viewers, and again at 10:00 p.m. on the high-profile news program "Agenda" which has a mainly white viewership. Both programs went out on transmitters covering the entire country to an estimated viewership in excess of nine million.

Over 600 counselors in seven centres throughout South Africa are available to answer counselling phone calls during and after each telecast. The telephone lines will be open for two weeks. Mr. Graham held a crusade in South Africa in 1973 after refusing to go there for almost 20 years until he was guaranteed an integrated audience. Following that crusade, the newspaper headlines read, "Graham Says Apartheid is Sin."

This current opportunity came out of Mr. Graham's Mission World outreach from London in 1989 which was sent by satellite to many countries across Africa. Because of the prevalence of television and the strength of the church in South Africa, this approach on national television was the most practical in that country. This is the third year that Mr. Graham's telecasts have been carried on the state network.

Soviet evangelical church barely holding its own

Ralph Mann

DENTON, Tex. (NNI) — Despite increased activity over the past three years by many Western evangelical groups, evangelization and Soviet church development is continuing to prove difficult and will take a long time.

Turning the tide after 74 years of legally declared atheism is a large task.

Despite the importation of millions of Bibles during this period, few Christians in the Soviet Union own one. Only three to five per cent of the total Soviet population of 292 million have even had access to any portion of Scripture. Most of the 120 languages of the Soviet people do not have Scripture in their mother tongue. In the Ukraine alone (pop. 55 million) Christian leaders plead for 20 million Bibles.

Most of the estimated 5,000 "new" churches in the Soviet Union since 1988 are really re-opened Russian Orthodox Churches, previously allocated for non-religious purposes under Communist rule. Very few new communities of evangelized believers have appeared.

Resurfacing

Of the two largest evangelical denominations, the Baptists number 250,000 adult members. This figure, counted for the first time since the 1960s, is only one-half the previous estimate. Pentecostals may number 150,000. The number of churches added to these two denominations indicates a 10 per cent growth, and much of this growth can be accounted for by the surfacing of existing underground churches.

Many evangelical congregations are quite satisfied to simply replace their numbers lost to Western immigration movements (for some, a significant percentage of their congregation). It is a little early to expect more.

Total adult membership in Soviet evangelical churches is much less than one per cent of the Soviet population, while the Muslim population (60 million) is expected to double by the year 2050. The Russian Orthodox Church is similar in size to the Muslim population.

"The Holy Spirit in End Times"

SIXTH ANNUAL

HOLY SPIRIT CONFERENCE

ALL DAY, SAT. OCT. 26, 1991

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A WHOLE DAY OF WORKSHOPS, PRAISE, WORSHIP, AND DYNAMIC TEACHING ENDING WITH SPECIAL EVENING WORSHIP SERVICE

REGISTRATION $20 PER PERSON (NOT INCL. MEALS)
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A Christian Communications Centre conference
For more information call (416) 270-4026

CRC congregation among those honoured by U.S. Council on Disabilities

LAKE GENEVA, Wis. (EP) — Coinciding with the first anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) has presented its Caring Church Award to six churches across the U.S. which demonstrate exemplary outreach to persons with disabilities.

The churches include Orland Park Christian Reformed Church, Orland Park, Illinois; College Church, Weaton, Illinois; Crystal Evangelical Free Church, New Hope, Minnesota; First Lutheran Church, Helena, Montana; Beth Messiah Congregation, Livingston, New Jersey; and The Special Gathering, Cocoa, Florida.

Several of the churches demonstrate unusual and creative models of ministry, encouraging disabled people to exercise their leadership skills. "The Special Gathering is made up of more than 175 mentally handicapped people, with many in leadership positions. Mentally handicapped persons serve as ushers, deacons and even fill out the choir," explained Steven Jensen, president of CCPD. The Special Gathering, a unique church that ministers to mentally handicapped persons, is sponsored by 54 local churches in Brevard County, Florida.

The Caring Church Award is presented to those congregations which accelerate Christian ministry through creative and unique programs to meet the needs of disabled persons and their families. The awards program was instituted by the CCPD in order to encourage other churches in developing outreach opportunities into the disability community.

"It's encouraging that although the church, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, is for the most part exempt, we can honour these six congregations which have gone far beyond a legislative mandate to impact the disability community in a positive way," Jensen added.

The Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities is a national consortium of over 200 disability ministries and leaders who advocate an evangelical perspective on issues which relate to disabled persons and the church.

Look for our Thanksgiving issue next week

son, be admc **Bible Notebook** Ac.19.19.
many books *there is* no end; and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh.
Reading, Da.5.
Or, *much reading*. p.p.ch.1.18.

Al Wolters

An unfunny pun

"'What do you see Amos?' he asked. 'A basket of ripe fruit,' I answered. Then the Lord said to me, 'The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer'" (Amos 8:2, NIV).

If you check other translations of this verse you will notice that most of them do not have the word "ripe," even though it occurs twice in the NIV. And a check of the original Hebrew also shows that the word "ripe" does not occur. Then why is it found in the NIV?

The answer is that in this way the NIV translators have tried to reproduce something of the word-play in the original Hebrew. In a vision the Lord had shown Amos a basket of summer fruit (Hebrew *gayts*). When Amos had properly identified the object in the vision the Lord says, literally, "The end (Hebrew *geyts*) has come upon my people Israel." The two words sound almost the same in Hebrew (like "kites" and "Kate's"), and the Lord makes a pun on the basis of this similarity in sound.

There is nothing funny about this pun, however, because the judgment which is here announced over Israel (in this case the Northern Kingdom) was executed by the Assyrians not long after this prophetic vision. Israel was deported into foreign lands and really did come to the final *geyts* of its national existence. This is one of the chilling things about the book of Amos.

Hebrew dialects

But there is a further subtlety in the Hebrew which only increases the terrible poignancy of this verse. The Lord is speaking to Amos, who was from the Southern Kingdom (Judah), and who was called to announce judgment to the Northern Kingdom (Israel). The Northerners had no difficulty understanding this Southerner because Hebrew was the language that was spoken in both kingdoms.

However, the dialect of Hebrew spoken in the North was slightly different from that spoken in the South — comparable perhaps to British and North American versions of English. Hebrew scholars have discovered that one of the differences between the two dialects was in the Northern pronunciation of the word for "summer fruit," which the Northerners pronounced *geyts* instead of *gayts*. In other words, they made no distinction in pronunciation between the words for "summer fruit" and "end," just as Oxford English does not distinguish between "father" and "farther," or between "larva" and "lava." When they said *geyts*, it could mean either "summer fruit" or "end." It is this peculiarity that the Lord exploits in Amos's vision of the basket of summer fruit.

Imagine Amos a Canadian

It is easy to understand the point if we imagine Amos to be a Canadian, and the Lord is announcing judgment over Oxford. Suppose that the Lord shows Amos in a vision the larva of a Locust (compare the vision of locusts in Amos 7: 1-3), and says to him: "What do you see, Amos?" and Amos, with his North American accent, replies, "A larva." Then the Lord says, "Yes, like 'lahva' will I pour out my anger over my city, Oxford." By mimicking the Oxford pronunciation of "larva," the lord shifts attention to the same-sounding word "lava," with its suggestion of disaster and destruction. In the same way, by mimicking the Northern pronunciation of "Summer fruit," he draws attention to the same-sounding word "end" in Hebrew.

When we mimic another person's pronunciation, we are generally making fun of that person. We find the same phenomenon here. Just as the Lord uses biting sarcasm in his message to Israel (see Amos 4:4: "Go to Bethel and sin!"), so he here uses mockery in an effort to get through to his people. He sneers at their pronunciation, makes fun of a dialect where a "summer fruit" means "end".

And yet in the midst of this caustic mockery he still speaks of "my people Israel," reminding them of their special status as his covenant people. He is still the God who says, "Seek me and live!" (Amos 5:4).

Al Wolters teaches religion / theology and classical languages at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Messianic Jews targets of 'reverse anti-Semitism,' leaders say

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — Criticism from the Jewish community over a recent national conference for Messianic Jews has Messianics crying foul.

Articles decrying the event and its leaders appeared in issues of the *American Jewish World*, a Jewish newspaper, weeks before it was held in Minneapolis. Of particular concern to many Jewish leaders: a mass mailing by conference leaders inviting thousands of Jews to attend the conference. One rabbi, in a piece printed the first day of the conference in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, accused conference organizers of treading on the rights of Jews to religious freedom.

Quite the contrary, says Ed Rothman, senior pastor of Seed of Abraham, a Messianic congregation in Minneapolis which sponsored the conference. It is Messianic Jews whose religious freedom rights have been violated.

In a rebuttal, Rothman wrote, "One of the inalienable rights guaranteed to us as citizens is to express our beliefs freely to anyone who cares to listen. In today's world of mass mailings to target markets I am surprised that we are portrayed as violating the religious freedom of others by sending them an invitation to investigate what many Jews have found to be 'the spiritual truth.'"

Particularly insidious, Jewish leaders say, is the motive of Messianic Jews to "convert" other Jews to their way of thinking. An article in *American Jewish World (AJW)* titled "This is a missionary cult" quoted Rabbi Jerome Herzog of Kenesseth Israel as saying Messianics target those who are "basically lonely and in need of company, approval, acceptance."

Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, who heads Jews for Judaism, a group meant to counter the evangelistic efforts of Jews for Jesus, contends that Messianic Jews have adopted many of the forms of Judaism. He told *AJW*, "[When they] insert any reference to Jesus as the Lord...this is not Judaism. This is a missionary cult."

For decades the Jewish community has debated the question: "Who is a Jew?" Discussion on this topic has been contentious at times, violent at others.

Unjust distinction

Israel's Supreme Court recently held that the Jewish "law of return" does not apply to Jews who accept Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah. The Court held that such persons are no longer Jews, but are Christians. The decision was decried by Messianic Jews in Israel and in North America. It has been pointed out that agnostic Jews, atheistic Jews, and Jews who have taken on other religious beliefs are still honored as Jews under the law of return. The case has been appealed, and the Court will re-hear it, this time with a five justice panel.

Unlike other religious traditions, Judaism is more than a belief system. It is also a racial heritage, and the Jewish community is a close-knit one, bonded together through centuries of persecution. For this reason it is particularly important to Messianic Jews — those who have come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and of the world — to retain their culture, their heritage, and their community as Jews. It is particularly painful for them to be rejected by the Jewish community, which has suffered such intense rejection and hatred itself.

Acceptance of Messiah makes you no longer Jewish

To be rejected by the Jewish community is "a form of anti-Semitism," Rothman said. "The accusation that Messianic Jews are not really Jewish, and that Messianic groups are cults, is wrong."

"We are exactly what the early first century Jewish followers of Messiah were. We are coming back to first century Messianism," said Jeff Kipp, co-pastor of Seed of Abraham

"What has been forgotten is that Christianity is an outgrowth of Judaism," Rothman said. "We're going back to our roots of 2,000 years ago and trying to rediscover them in a 20th century context. Sure, we theologically disagree...but we're still Jewish."

"We are a return to biblical Judaism," Kipp added.

AJW editor Marshall Hoffman disagrees. "I think the practices that these Hebrew Christians engage in is a deceptive practice and it uses the trappings of Jewish cultural life to trap Jews," he told *EP News*. "In traditional Jewish belief If you've accepted Jesus as Messiah you are no longer Jewish and you shouldn't go around claiming that you are. There's nothing wrong with Christianity as a religion if they want to embrace that. But to go around trying to claim that this is the ultimate extension and the point that all Jews should all end up Messianic shows a total disrespect for ethnic Judaism."

Rothman said he sees the accusations against Messianic Jews on the part of the Jewish community as a disturbing feature for a community which has suffered, and defended itself against, anti-Semitism for so long. This is a form of "reverse anti-Semitism," he says. "They change all the rules when it comes to Messianic Jews."

Rothman concluded, "All we ask of the Jewish community is that they keep it fair...treat us with the same respect and honesty with which they want to be treated." Instead of using tactics of fear and hostility, the Jews should "put their energy into educating their people in a positive way."

As Jesus once asked His disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Kipp said. "We say, as Jews, and we will not cease saying it, the One who all the Law and prophets pointed to: 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.' And the issue will not go away."

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The bishop of Budapest wants to be a bishop of mission

Bert Witvoet

The newly elected bishop of the Reformed Church of Budapest, Hungary, toured Canada and the United States during the early part of September. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Lorant Hegedus had come to visit Hungarian Reformed churches and other Reformed centres on the continent. I listened to him preach a sermon in Hungarian at the induction service of a young Hungarian minister at the First Hungarian Presbyterian Church of Toronto. I did not understand what Hegedus was saying when he preached, but on the way back to Hamilton, when I was in a car with him, his wife Zsuzsanna and the Rev. Csaba Baksa, he enlightened me about the sermon and answered questions I put to him about his life and vision.

Hegedus is a well-built man in his late 50s. He smiles readily and speaks English quite fluently. He is a scholar who, according to Baksa, quotes freely from the Bible, from theological texts or works of literature as he addresses an audience.

The story of Hegedus' life is a fascinating one. He is a man who was shaped in the crucible of communist oppression and relegated to the smallest Reformed congregation in southern Hungary for 20 years because of the leading part he played in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 against Soviet rule. He had been touched by the Gospel while a young man, experiencing a conversion that was to set the direction for the rest of his life. As a Christian he could not, for example, acknowledge a totalitarian state that he wanted to be god. "Only the father of the Lord Jesus Christ can be God," he says.

The bells of the revolution

Hegedus recalled for me the days of the revolution. On October 23 he joined workers and students protesting on Calvin Square in Budapest in favour of human rights and freedom of religion. Between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. the first young people were shot near the radio station on the square. Young Hegedus ran into the nearby Calvin Reformed Church. Finding himself alone in the cavernous building, he ran into the tower, up the stairs and started ringing the church bell. Soon other bells in neighbouring churches began to ring and the revolution was on.

On October 25 Hegedus rode atop a Russian tank while holding a white flag. The tank drove along the Danube river towards the parliament buildings, part of a whole column of tanks moving in the same direction and in support of the popular uprising. Hegedus makes sure that I take note of the fact that he was holding a white flag. "I did not hold a gun. That would not be right for a pastor," he says. Another column of Russian tanks approached the parliament buildings from the other side. Before he knew what was happening, the two tank columns began to shoot at each other. Many people died. Hegedus narrowly escaped death.

On October 31 an article by Hegedus appeared in the Reformed church paper of the day. It dealt with reformation in times of oppression. When the revolution collapsed, it was obvious to him and others that he had to leave Budapest.

Years of isolation and study

His bishop told him that if he wanted to be a pastor in the Reformed Church he had to be a diplomat in the communist state. His response was that since his conversion at a conference in 1948 he could not help preaching the Gospel. The bishop decided that because of the role Hegedus played in the revolution he had to serve a small church. And so Hegedus was sent to the small village of Hidas.

"I lived in a corporate house with six other people, one of whom had a drinking problem," he says. After three years Hegedus was allowed to move into a pastor's flat with his wife Zsuzsanna, whom he had married in 1956. Together they raised two sons and two daughters on a very small income. Their large garden enabled them to survive.

Because he lived in a small village and pastored a small congregation Hegedus was able to read and study to his heart's content. Instead of focusing on increasing his income, he would simply ask for theological works whenever anyone questioned him about his living standard. Through the years he was visited by professors from Switzerland and Holland and he translated a theological work by the well-known German Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung. After 15 years of "exile," he had put together the largest personal library in Hungary — 15,000 volumes.

In 1979 he was given permission to go abroad. He went to a university in Western Europe (I did not catch the name of the town) and in 70 days managed to write a 350-page dissertation with four typewriters going at a time. After 20 more days he had defended his thesis and received his doctorate. When he returned to Hungary after three months, the authorities (religion was considered a state matter in communist times) felt they had no choice but to assign him to a larger church now that he had received international recognition as a scholar. It was thus that Hegedus came to be the pastor of the Reformed Church on Freedom Square in Budapest.

While there he wrote a book about transcendence and lectured in Prague. "Then came *perestroika*," he says with a smile. "And now I am the first freely elected bishop of Budapest and president of general synod for the next six years."

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Lorant Hegedus. Photo: Bert Witvoet

And here he sits, chatting away in English in the back seat of a comfortable North American car, while his wife, who had heard all this before, closes her eyes from time to time. We are near Oakville

Russian tank stands guard in Budapest: the fight is nearly over. Photo: Courtesy Csaba Baksa

now, the site of a major Ford plant. I am feeling a little nauseous. It's partly the fact that I am writing while riding in a car, something I can never do with impunity, and partly the delicious cakes I indulged in an hour ago wreaking their revenge in my belly. But from Hegedus I learn that where duty calls or danger....

Some co-operation was necessary

The Hungarian churches have many problems, says Hegedus. Many of them are left-overs of 40 years of domination by a communist totalitarian system. Churches have to deal with the question of co-operation with the state. Hegedus does not necessarily see co-operation as a bad thing. He does not blame his former bishop, for example, for the advice and the assignment he was given. At least Hungary did not end up like Albania where the church has no presence, he says.

But at the same time the church must deal radically with those who spied for the state. There is no way one can reconcile spying on brothers and sisters during worship services and private counselling sessions with the work of the Holy Spirit, he says. Those who lived at the top, working either for the state or the church, could not do so without serving the totalitarian system. The task of bringing these sins to the fore has to proceed with caution but with resolve.

Another challenge facing the church in Hungary is an emerging pluralism. During the 40 years of oppression it was not possible to establish new churches. Only established churches were permitted to organize and meet. This lack of freedom prevented church splits, he says. But now that *perestroika* is here, what will happen to the unity of the church? Hegedus can see some churches in the countryside taking an independent route. But that would be fatal for the Hungarian churches outside of Hungary, he says. "They need our unity to survive." We want to learn from Holland and North America, "but we don't want their splits," he adds.

No theology of luxury

We shall not allow the extreme positions to be recognized, says Hegedus. One of the extremes he does not want is "cheap grace" — grace without repentance. "Grace is expensive," he asserts. In addition, he wants to avoid the extreme of wanting to renew everything or wanting to conserve everything. "We are the people of renewal," he adds "— the renewal of souls, of theology and of structure."

As far as renewal of structure is concerned, Hegedus sees changes taking place because of free elections and attempts to decentralize the decision-making process. A faithful adherence to Reformed church policy, not permitted during the 40 years of state-church intertwinement, will go a long way towards structural renewal, he believes.

As for theology, Hegedus likes Dutch theologian Hendrikus Berkhof and wants to take the best from theologians like Barth, Bultmann, Tillich and Kung. "But we must shape it and fit it all within the framework of the word of God and the Reformed confessions." He calls his vision for the church an encyclopedic theology of the word, or a "positive critical biblical theology."

He is looking for a practical theology, too. "We cannot have the theology of luxury," he says. Although he wants to avoid the pitfalls of fundamentalism, he likes the American emphasis on practical theology. "The life of the Christian must be a life that experiences the love of God through Jesus Christ."

Hegedus wants to be a bishop of mission, not a bishop of administration. "We have a great opportunities for mission with schools and hospitals and social institutions, but we have few financial means and few people to carry out the work," he says.

The work of an angel

We're almost in Hamilton when I ask him about the sermon I had missed. "I know you preached on Isaiah 6: 1-3," I said, "about the angels who sang 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory,' but what did you tell the people and the young minister?"

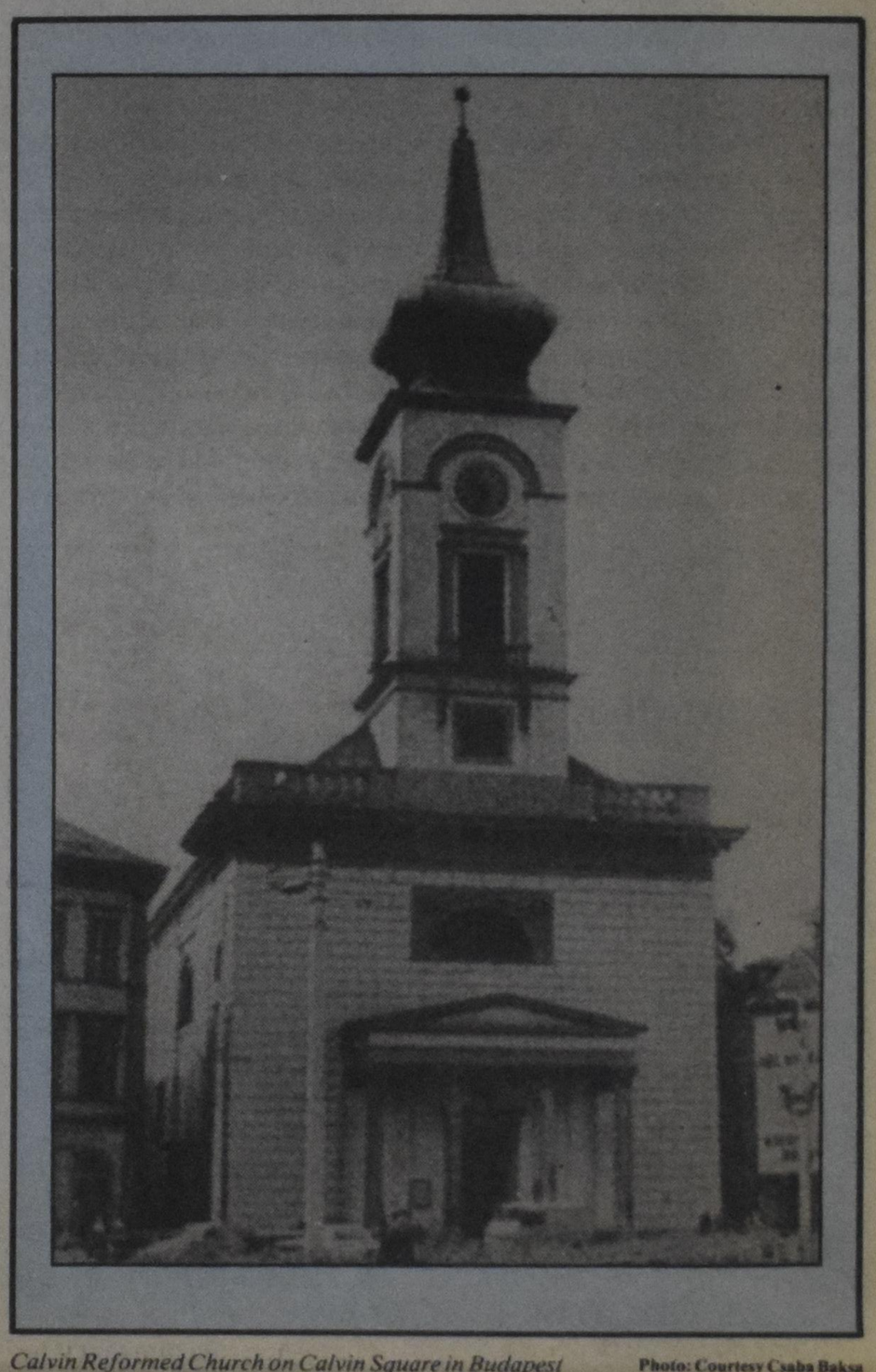
Hegedus explained that he had said that the preacher in a congregation is that congregation's angel, as we find it described in the book of Revelation. This angel must proclaim that only God is God and that he rules over all. The angel must hold God's point of view and not a point of view of a congregation without God. The two wings covering the faces of the angels signify that humility of the preacher, while the wings covering the feet tell that he is not holy. The wings with which they fly are the wings of prayer and faith. It's the minister's task to make the congregation fly on wings too.

God's glory is at the centre of the ministry of the angel of the congregation: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty." This glory was hidden on Calvary when Jesus Christ died, but it was revealed in its fulness when he arose from the grave so that "the whole earth is full of his glory."

Where is the glory?

By the time Hegedus had ended his explanation, we had arrived in Hamilton. The streets around Copps Coliseum were blocked off by police because Team Canada and Team USA were playing for the Canada Cup. "We must stop and see this game. My wife will not sleep until she can see this game between Canada and the USA," Hegedus said jokingly. Was this game or its outcome part of the glory of God of which Isaiah spoke?

"He had to be a diplomat in the communist state."



Calvin Reformed Church on Calvin Square in Budapest **Photo: Courtesy Csaba Baksa**

After a little detour we arrived at the brow of Hamilton mountain. Csaba Baksa parked his car on a look-out point. The air was balmy for mid-September. I began to feel a little better. The bright lights of the city were spread out like a blanket, ending to the right where we knew Lake Ontario to be. We stood without saying anything for a while. Was this perhaps part of the glory of God?

A quick picture taken by me of Hegedus at Csaba Baksa's house and a brief farewell and blessing brought this evening to an end. As I drove home to St. Catharines, this time in my car and alone, it was after midnight. I learned that Canada had won the hockey game when young people in a passing car flew a large Canadian flag. The Blue Jays were leading in the bottom of the ninth in Seattle, Washington, said the radio announcer. "It can't get any better than this," I said to myself jokingly, knowing full well that the glory of God lay not in those little victories.

In the back of my mind I could hear the little church choir of the induction service sing in Hungarian Psalm 100:

All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice
Serve him with joy, his praises tell,
come now before him and rejoice.
Because the Lord our God is good,
his mercy is forever sure.
His faithfulness at all times stood
and shall from age to age endure.

The church universal had become a little more real to me that evening, as had the church suffering persecution and poverty. But more than that, the church flying on wings of faith and prayer had manifested itself in the form of Bishop Hegedus. All people "that on earth do dwell" should be flying that way, I thought. Something to think about for churches in Canada and the U.S.A. who might engage in a theology of luxury and in the luxury of splitting into mere fragments of praise — somewhat like the sporadic cheers in Copp's Coliseum and the pinpoint lights of Hamilton at night.

FEATURE

Poetry

The poetry of Nick Vogelzang

Bert Witvoet

One of our most enthusiastic subscribers in the United States is retired pastor Nick Vogelzang. Rev. Vogelzang would love to see *Calvinist Contact* appear in a U.S. format. "There's nothing like it here," he tells us. Vogelzang has asked us to pray about it first, although he is in a hurry. Being 72 years old has not slowed him down much, he says. "The time is short and there is so much to be done."

One of the things he would like to see done before he retires from earth is to help establish a Reformed seminary in the Soviet Union. He is a ministry assistant for World-Wide Christian Schools, which, as the name tells us, wants to spread Christian education throughout the world. I was able to refer Vogelzang to Rev. Csaba Baksa of Hamilton, Ont., who knows the Reformed churches in the Soviet Union and has visited them recently. Baksa was able to provide Vogelzang with names of three Hungarian Reformed theologians (he himself is one of them) who are willing to consider teaching at such a seminary in the Soviet Union.

In addition to these interests, Vogelzang likes to write and read poetry. He sent us a few of his creations which we gladly publish here. Vogelzang is of the old school of poetry that focuses on grand themes, set in hymn-like verses with a fixed rhythm and rhyme pattern.

Thanksgiving, Mercy & Graces

Great God, we sing that mighty hand
By which supported still we stand;
The opening year Thy mercy shows that
That mercy crowns it till it close.

By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still we are guarded by our God;
By His incessant bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.

Above two stanzas from the poem by Philip Doddridge (1702 — 1751)

Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand

Thy mercies Lord, Thy mercies deep,
To us by day and as we sleep
Thy broadening mercies through each year
From early frost to thanksgiving cheer.

Thy mercies Father on us lay;
Continue Thou from day to day
Now in this thankful season blend,
From dawning year to seasons end.

What have we formed that is our own?
Did we perform by labours (groan?)
Or is it grace, pure grace from Thee?
Father of Mercies, Help us see.

So blessed God, Great Three in One
Crown thankful days til time is done
And we Thy children greet Thee Lord,
Forever and for aye Adored.

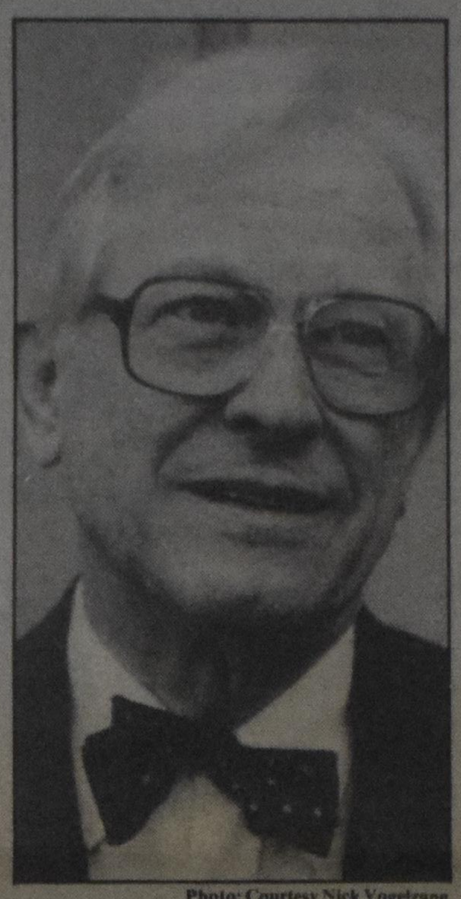


Photo: Courtesy Nick Vogelzang
Nick Vogelzang.

God's Hurricane Voice

Great howling God of Hugo's Hurricane force
You speak the whistling winds on hemispheric course.
You blast and blow gargantuan gales that roll
the ocean's waves tempestuous heaving scroll.

You tell its full careening trail,
Across one-half the world's great watery grail.
The shrieking fierce obtruding storm
Is not withstood by towering steel or bowing bending human form.

The stinging wind is roaring boisterous gale
Pounds down the sound and drowns the man held sail
The breaking smash of humble self-built domicile,
The ripping of the boardwalk from the speaking singing spile.

The banshee screeching sibilant wail
The whipping surge of sandy gritty grinding swale
The crashing curling din from highest holy heaven
The laughing liquid breath of satan evil smirking given.

God's gentle sigh into a mighty monstrous cyclone flies
The salty spume at least ten miles into the land and dies.
The torrents gush their churning troughs to fill
His kingly moaning vibrant voice subsides
And all is lordly beauty — sudden, still.

To the tune Whisper a Prayer

God chose you from the beginning
God called you from your birth,
He loved you from everlasting,
So praise Him for all your worth.

My Holy Spirit I love you,
You give me my great worth,
My sins forgiven, atoned for,
Predestined before the earth.

My triune God, you're my Saviour,
Jesus, the Son of God,
All worked together to save me,
Glory, all glory, my Lord.

Elect by God's sweet grace sovereign
converted against our will,
Prior came regeneration,
He works His omnipotence still.

Glorify God in the morning,
Glorify God, all day;
John Calvin's theme in the evening,
So lift up God's praises for aye.

Resurrection Song

From sermon # 754 written for my mother, Clara Vogelzang, 1958.

When in this cold gray damp of death I sleep,
When o'er my face the moldering mask doth creep,
When down the dark grave lowered deep,
O Lord, remember me!

The snows of somber cold will fall,
The heavy hand of death will crawl
All o'er us in that black dread pall,
O Lord, remember me!

Then in that grave so still and stark
Will come the voice of Him! O hark!
And we will from that tomb embark,
Thou Lord, rememberedst me!

And not alone but thousands more
Will at His footsteps kneel, adore,
And from our hearts the song will soar:
Thou Lord, rememberedst me!

In never ending praises sing
To our Redeemer, Saviour, King.
From all the saints their shouts will ring:
Thou Lord, rememberedst me!

To all who serve the Lord below
And that blest Saviour fear and know:
Through sovereign grace no debt we owe,
O Lord, remember me!

At Dawning with God

I sought my God in the morning,
With companions of heart and will.
I sought my God in the morning,
When all was quiet and still.

I sought my God in the morning,
And steadily all through the day.
The hour I spent at dawning,
Had strengthened me all the Way.

I sought my God in the morning
And also at sunset rare.
He led me by golden waiting
And gave me His peace to spare.

Feature

We're going to be a CRC without the C!

Photo: John Van Dyk
Rev. Jelle Tuininga holds forth from the pulpit

Photo: Anniversary book First Lethbridge CRC
First CRC: the building that houses the group that wants to leave.

Jake Kuiken

The title of this article is attributed to a frustrated member of the First Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge, Alta. The statement was apparently made following a Sept. 6 congregational meeting called by the church's council to consider leaving the Christian Reformed denomination. The speaker was trying hard to explain what it would be like for the congregation to follow its leadership and leave the CRC.

The proposal to leave was first put to the membership over the September long weekend. Members received a package of information along with a ballot which asked them to sign their name and vote in favour of following their council's decision. The outcome of the signed "straw vote" was also designed to be used in the process of splitting the congregational assets.

Pete Brandsma, vice-president of the council, said he had expected that an overwhelming majority of the congregation would decide in favour of leaving.

The deadline for the "straw vote" was September 15, just over a week after the congregational meeting. While some members on both sides of the dispute suggested there was lobbying going on, no one was able to substantiate those claims.

The results of the vote became widely known within a few days and bore out Brandsma's prediction. Approximately 10 per cent of the 455 eligible voters failed to exercise their franchise while of the remaining 410 or so members 79.5 per cent voted in favour of leaving and 20.5 per cent voted in favour of staying with the CRC.

Hans Van't Land, a member of the congregation who strongly supported his council's proposal, explained. "There's maybe only nine or 10 families who will not leave the CRC in the final analysis." According to him, support for the First CRC decision is much broader than just that church's membership. "There are members in other neighbouring CR churches who wish they had the same opportunity as we do."

It's time to leave

"We've been kept well informed about the events and changes in the CRC by our pastors, first by Lambert Mulder and now by Jelle Tuininga," explained Brandsma. "It's a terrible thing to happen," he acknowledged, "But I'm very comfortable with the decision." The preaching at First, the regular Sunday church bulletin messages and the many articles provided to council members by pastor Tuininga, who Van't Land described as, "a bit of a bull in a china shop and who makes no bones about anything," persuaded Brandsma and the others that, in spite of their love for the CRC, "it's now time to leave!"

Though Brandsma admits he hasn't read the "fourth day book", the science and evolution debate in the denomination "broke the camel's back." A study of reports to Synod on this issue and some of the other materials were sufficient. In his mind, writings like that challenge the "authority of Scripture," and for him there's simply, "no room for a debate on the historicity of the creation account."

Those thoughts were echoed by Van't Land, as well as Henry Doeve, another member who claimed, "I don't have these books!" The fact that "they challenge the authority of Scripture" is enough! In his view, the reason these kinds of things are coming forward and watering down the teachings of the CRC is so that the denomination will attract more members and achieve its "400,000 by 2000" Home Mission Board objective. Doeve, on the other hand, compared his position to that of Joshua: "Me and my house serve the Lord and not the CRC!"

A few "trivial" changes

According to Brandsma, the meeting with the congregation to talk about leaving "went well, there wasn't much friction there at all." He did admit that "some trivial" changes to the by-laws had caused problems for some members.

Those changes, made earlier this year at another congregational meeting, ensure that the majority, regardless of position, retains the assets of the church. Apparently, before the changes were made, the assets would have stayed with the members who remained with the CRC.

Brandsma also acknowledged that, while the date for that meeting and a general proposal to change the bylaws were made known in advance, copies of the exact changes were not given out before the meeting or even at the meeting itself. Other members claimed that amendments from the floor were also accepted and voted on at that meeting, allegedly contrary to the requirements for changing the bylaws.

Apparently in recognition of some potential difficulties, council on Sept. 22 announced that, after consulting a lawyer, the way to leave the denomination would be through some further changes in the by-laws. A congregational meeting on Sept. 30 will consider the proposed changes which this time have been published in advance in their entirety! Adoption of the changes will complete what has been referred to by some as "the coup d'etat of First CRC in Lethbridge."

Classis reacts

On Sept. 10, Classis Alberta South met in an emergency session to consider an appeal from a group of "dissenters," members of First CRC who want to stay in the CRC. They wanted to register their unhappiness with the planned council-led secession and obtain the support of the classis for their efforts to keep the church in the denomination.

After a lengthy debate about the legality of the meeting, classis did finally get around to considering the appeal and on a 24 to 8 vote decided to sustain the appeal of the "dissenters." At the same time the council of First CRC Lethbridge was asked by classis to slow down the process of leaving the denomination and seek reconciliation and healing with the dissenters.

Classis also established a committee of five to assist either with the process of reconciliation, or, in the event secession was unavoidable, to provide support and pastoral care to the group remaining with the CRC.

The council of First CRC apparently didn't think much of the last-minute intervention by classis. On Sept. 15, the final day for submitting ballots, the following statement was published in the bulletin: "Consistory was appalled at the highly irregular and prejudicial nature of the meeting" and called on the membership to proceed with the balloting on the question of whether or not to secede from the CRC.

That view was supported by Brandsma, who said, "We don't accept the authority of classis" and claimed that "The chairman was biased" in the way he conducted the meeting. Hans Van 't Land went even further, calling the classis meeting nothing more than "a kangaroo court" where he says his side wasn't allowed the opportunity to speak and present its case. At the same time, according to him, the "dissenters" got all the time they wanted.

Sense of disappointment

On the part of some of the "dissenters" the reconciliation and healing sought by classis was seen as well-intentioned but much too late. With the full benefit of hind-sight there's a wish that action had been taken much earlier.

Dennis Van Beek, one of the dissenters, although pleased with the decision of classis, nevertheless expressed a measure of disappointment that stronger action wasn't taken. "Last July already the pastor announced that, if things don't change I'm going to have to leave the CRC." Van Beek thinks Tuininga should have left the CRC then, rather than first ensuring he had an adequate following.

Ann Flim, one of those who wants to stay with the CRC said, "speaking for myself, as one of the "dissenters" who wants to stay in the CRC, even though I suppose I'm conservative on the issues, I haven't been treated fairly in First CRC; for years already I've felt left out." She feels that she has been quietly excluded and shunned by the other members of First CRC because she couldn't and didn't indicate her agreement with the direction of the church.

She knows that for a long time she did nothing about it. But "in January of this year we invited another couple to come to our house on a Sunday evening and talk with us about what had been going on. Instead 17 people showed up. In our first meeting we basically just vented our feelings, but after that it went way beyond that. I felt I belonged somewhere again."

Community rediscovered

"We've learned to share our faith and build each other up — not just get back into a comfortable pew. I hope that over time the animosity that now exists between some of the people will also go away," she said. Now that Classis Alberta South has given the "dissenters" its support, her faith and sense of belonging has been strengthened even more.

It's not the reconciliation and healing sought by classis to which she attributes the rediscovered sense of community. She doesn't think that kind of reconciliation is very likely now. Rather, the fact that even young people have stopped her in local shopping malls to tell her that they're praying for her and the others at First CRC. It's that support which enables her to carry on. It's a dimension of faith she's obviously longed for but didn't find in First CRC. Now she's finding it as she's being pushed out of the church!

Van Beek had similar thoughts. His family spent two and a half years as members in a Mennonite Church in Didsbury. He thinks it would be good for every CRC member to join another church for a few

Continued on page 14 ...

We're going to be a CRC without the C!

...continued from page 13

years. "They would all learn compassion and not get hung-up on the rules and doctrines and learn to live a life for Jesus Christ."

Under judgment

Both Flim and Van Beek appeared to recognize that it will be hard to overcome some of the strong feelings held by those who will soon be leaving the denomination. According to Flim, "we've heard that they consider us apathetic, that we don't know anything and that we're going in the wrong way."

The concern she voiced seems well grounded. Van't Land expressed the opinion that "the CRC is no longer a Bible believing church, you can quote me on that! Synod allowed beliefs to happen that are against the Word of God; it's the duty of a consistory to guard against these things." According to him, those beliefs have also infiltrated some other nearby CRC churches. Locally, "liberalism is rampant in Maranatha," he says.

According to Van't Land, the cause of this kind of deterioration "is people's apathy, ignorance and not being informed about the issues. The ministers in general don't give the information they should in the bulletins. Rev. Tuininga has done his ultimate best to keep us informed. I take pride in that and give the credit to J.T."

In fact, like some of the others who will soon be leaving the CRC, Van't Land considers that he has been abandoned by the church in which he grew up and which he has loved his entire life. For him the denominational covenant has been broken by synodical decisions of recent years. He considers himself to be true to the historic teachings of the CRC denomination. Consequently, he looks at those that don't want to follow the leadership of council as basically schismatic and troublemakers.

When asked to comment on the recent events at Classis Alberta South and First CRC, the church which he has served since the late 70s, Jelle Tuininga refused to comment. He noted only that he'd also refused to provide *The Banner* (the CRC's denominational weekly) with a story. He saw no purpose "just to hang out the dirty wash." He added, "There's already enough lies and ill-feelings being spread about by some malcontents." Consequently, he just wouldn't provide *Calvinist Contact* "more grist for the mill." He concluded, "Let the Lord be the judge!"

The aftermath

For both sides the outcome of the "straw vote" was a foregone conclusion — just a final formality. There was also a very quiet but easily heard undertone in a significant number of conversations I had with many of those on all sides of the issue: "Let's get it over with as quickly as possible, because once it's done, they're gone and we can get on with our lives." At the same time there is considerable concern in the CRC community in Classis Alberta South that some others may yet follow.

As Dick Wynia, pastor of Maranatha, Calgary, indicated, "If there's no change in the direction (of the CRC), I will certainly have questions about the positions taken by the CRC and my relationship to them and the CRC." He and his fellow council member who attended the Classis meeting were two of the eight who supported the First Lethbridge position.

While the secession seems rather clear and final — the line has been crossed — the future isn't all that clear. There are still the assets of the congregation to divide and the possibility of legal action to settle that question hasn't been ruled out altogether. Both sides are reported to have consulted lawyers on how to proceed through the courts if it becomes necessary to protect their interests.

Possibly in an effort to forestall the potential legal difficulties, the church's council has recently displayed a more-conciliatory approach to the "dissenters." The bulletin of Sept. 22 contained the following request. "It would be so good if we could now complete and settle this matter in as peaceful and Christian a way as possible. Why should that not be possible? Let's respect each other's convictions and not cause needless enmity. May God grant it!"

At the same time the message ironically rebukes the same classis which is taking considerable time and effort to bring about reconciliation and healing. "If we only had the help and co-operation of classis in so doing (resolving this matter), it would be so beneficial. To date such help has not been forthcoming. God have mercy on us."

What is there to be learned?

Having listenen carefully to both sides of this dispute, it's hard to avoid some tentative conclusions. First, there's no doubt that among those from both sides and all who inhabit the pews on Sundays, there 's a genuine desire to be faithful to the Gospel as the CRC denomination has been led to understand that message.

Second, the process of leaving the CRC began a long time ago in First CRC, slowly, a step at a time. For some members and leaders secession may well have found a deep grounding in unresolved experiences of the past. Third, for many years already, the leadership at First CRC has been nurtured by a perspective which selectively presented isssues in support of an agenda. Finally, the denominational tendency to allow the professional clergy to dominate the institution inevitably leads to situations where strong personalities produce some cult-like characteristics.

Inevitably, all of this leads back to the opening statement and a rejoinder: "What do you mean, without the 'Christian' or without the 'Church?' "

Jake Kuiken, a registered social worker who lives and works in Calgary, Alta., is a member of the Christian Reformed Church.

Disputations

To Calvin Tuininga and Jelle Tuininga...
and all the other pastors who are leading their flocks into separation from the Christian Reformed Church

Suppose you had to go to heaven
this afternoon at half past three,
worn out by endless disputations
aimed at the "new theology."

Suppose you had to leave this planet
because the Lord had sent for you.
You would be forced to stand before Him
holding your arguments, volume two.

And if the Lord would pose the question:
"What's that you're holding in your hand?"
You would with shame have to acknowledge:
"My final title — Let's Disband."

I am afraid God would be angry
with your expensive, futile search.
Instead of following the Saviour
you seek to be the one true church.

Bert Witvoet
Adapted from the Dutch poem "Dispuut" by Anton B. Lam.

small talk

Alice Los

Dining room tables are highly significant

The other day our dining room table was replaced. It was the end of an era. For more than 30 years this table had served our family well. It literally stood at the centre of events on many a memorable occasion. Once when it was still very new and we were having lunch together, our four little girls were told we were going to have another baby. Later when their new brother was already growing up fast, there was that time when we pulled up another chair and welcomed another brother, a four-year-old with brown eyes and dark curly hair. Great moments, experienced around that table.

As newly arrived immigrants we had bought it and proudly put it in our tiny dining room. It moved with us from place to place and it accommodated more people all the time as the first boyfriends began to stay for supper. In the end it had seated a whole clan at various times. Now it sits in a second-hand store and I mourn its passing from our house.

Significance beyond mealtime

Tables are a wonderful invention. Inanimate objects that they are, they nevertheless have the capacity to draw people together. They often are part of history when the mighty of this earth meet to hammer out an agreement or to sign a treaty. Mostly they are a part of family histories. A birthday party or a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner will bring family and friends around and memories are woven into a colourful heirloom that grows as the years go by.

A good dining room table always has room for one more person in need of fellowship. Young children, too, will pick it as the spot to do their homework because a helpful parent is usually nearby.

A family dispute is more easily resolved with all elbows on the table and everyone looking the others in the eye. And are not most announcements of consequence made at the table? Are not all difficult questions asked at mealtime? (Why is Johnny's dad not living at home anymore?" "Why does God not make grandma well?").

Witness to the faith, too

I would hope that all dining room (or kitchen) tables are witness to much laughter as well — and singing. Does any family sing anymore after dinner, as a rule, or on special occasions?

Finally, a dining room table makes an effective family altar. Gathered as a unit, it is where parents and children appear before the Lord. It is where they come with their praise and petitions, where they hear and discuss God's Word. It is where, by God's grace, they grow in faith and harmony. Any table used as such has probably witnessed family life at its best.

Meanwhile, our new table is shiny and beautiful. It looks as if it has been made to last a lifetime. I wonder about all the things to which it will be privy. So far it doesn't *know* much. That's why it has yet to earn my loyalty.

Alice Los lives in Inkerman, Ont.

'Justice Van' to tour Canada

WINNIPEG, Man. (MCC) — Canadians are concerned about the growing problem of crime. But is the old solution to crime — lock up the criminals — the best way to solve the problem?

Addison and Gerda Klassen say no. The Klassens, founders of El Dad Ranch, a halfway house for offenders with mental disabilities in Steinbach, Man., have embarked on a year-long trip across Canada in the Justice Van to invite Canadians to re-examine ways to respond to the problem of crime.

The tour, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Victim/Offender Ministries program, began with a commissioning service on September 22 at the Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church, where the Klassens are members.

According to the Klassens, "Since crime happens between people, justice should occur between people, too. When a criminal act is committed, one person does something that adversely affects another. As a result, trust is destroyed."

'Restorative justice'

The Klassens advocate a concept called "restorative justice," which seeks to find ways to "restore trust for victims, and give offenders insight into the effects of crime on others."

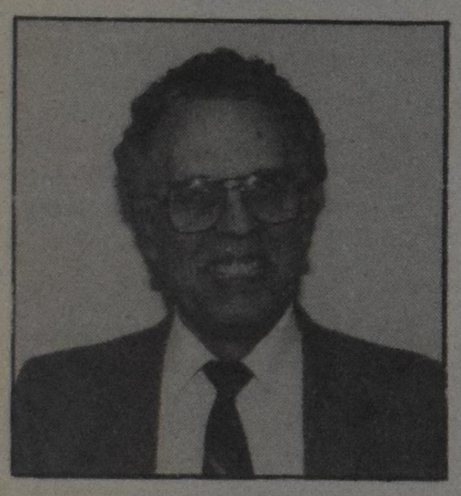
Examples of restorative justice, according to the Klassens, include prisoner visitation programs, keeping offenders out of the court system through mediation, face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders and alternatives to jail sentences.

During their travels they will be encouraging discussion about crime from the perspective of victims and offenders in an effort to find new and creative responses to the problem.

The Justice Van began its tour in Manitoba Sept. 15. It will be in that province until Oct. 22. The van will be in Saskatchewan from Oct. 22 - Nov. 30; B.C. from January 15 - March 15; Alberta from March 15 - Arpil 15; Ontario from April 15 - June 5; and New Brunswick from June 5 - June 20.

Mennonite involvement in victim-offender programs in Canada goes back to 1966 when the first prisoner visitation program began in Vancouver. Today around 1,200 people volunteer with the various Mennonite-supported victim-offender programs across the country.

For more information about the Justice Van Tour, contact MCC Victim/Offender Ministries, Box 2038, Clearbrook, BC V2T 3T8 (604) 850-6639.



In and around the workplace

Employment equity (2)

Ed Vanderkloet

From my column in the August 30 issue readers may have concluded that I favour strong government protection against discrimination in employment on the basis of gender, skin colour, national background and the like, but that I have misgivings about affirmative action such as embodied in current and proposed employment equity laws.

In an interview with the *Toronto Star* earlier this year, Ontario's Citizenship Minister, Elaine Ziemba, said that the government plans to introduce a law that will make it mandatory for employers (first in the public, later in the private sector) to hire women, visible minorities, aboriginals and disabled people, and to give them preference over white males until the racial and gender makeup of the workforce is a proportional reflection of that makeup in the geographic area concerned. According to Ziemba the new law will apply to any establishment with a payroll of $300,000 or over. (This may mean as few as eight employees.)

Compentency shouldn't take back seat

Obviously, it is one thing to pass such laws and quite another to implement or enforce them. How can a company with, say, 20 competent employees make sure that three years from now 10 of them are women, three belong to a visible minority, two are disabled and one is a Native? Perhaps I should have highlighted the word *competent*. For that's where the shoe pinches. When a company hires people, the most important criterion is competence. The same applies to a school appointing a teacher, or a government department hiring staff. At least that's what the public expects. Above all, that's what the *applicant* expects. And it is undeniably true that giving preference to blacks and females over whites and males constitutes discrimination on the basis of race or gender just as much as when these categories were reversed.

How would you feel if you were bypassed because the vacancy is strictly reserved for a black, an Asian, a woman or an Indian? (At the Ontario College of Art all vacancies must now be filled by women.) Or if you were discharged and your job given to someone else only because that someone else is a woman? (It happened to Prof. Phillip Ferreira at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute when the school decided to change its gender balance last year.)

But let's put the question another way. If you were a black or a woman, how would you feel if the job were given to you strictly because of your skin colour or gender? And how do you think your fellow workers will react if some white male were fired to make place for you?

Government intrusion

I believe more and more that, like pay equity, employment equity is an intrusion by government in an area where it has very limited, if any, business at all. The end result will be chaos and continued injustice. The wrongs it is meant to correct will result in even greater injustice elsewhere.

In a real way we are confronted here by a problem of our own making. We live in a society that sees the government as an omnipotent agency, able to cure all our ills. Political parties in opposition lambast the government and demand instant action. During election campaigns they make unfulfillable promises. And when elected they discover how limited their power really is and that they are often more impotent than omnipotent. Bob Rae and his cabinet colleagues could testify to that.

Is there then no place for affirmative action at all? Yes, there is. I know of two kinds of situations in which I believe employment equity laws are a must. The first concerns the disabled. Whereas competence should be the deciding factor in hiring, disabled people — precisely because they are disabled — will frequently be less competent. In other words, many of them cannot compete on the basis of competence. To ensure as much as possible that they, too, can participate in the workplace, larger firms should be required to make room for them.

The second situation involves choosing between applicants or candidates with *equal* competence or qualifications. In such events the law may require that preference be given to categories of people who have been the victims of past discrimination.

Ed Vanderkloet is a national representative for the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), headquartered in Mississauga, Ont.

Edmonton inner city house gets new life

EDMONTON, Alta. (MCC) — The 80 year-old two-storey duplex in Edmonton's inner city had definitely seen better days. The porches were falling off, the siding was peeling and the interior was in bad shape. But by October the house will be ready to be a home for low income families, thanks to a joint project of the Edmonton Inner City Housing Society and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The project will see the house returned to its original 1912 state, complete with restored porches.

The duplex is being renovated by a ten-person crew, who are learning job skills on the site. The training program, which is being offered by MCC, is supported by the federal department of Employment and Immigration and the Private Non-Profit Housing Program, a federal-provincial program developed by Alberta Municipal Affairs.

PORT ALBERNI CHR. REF. CHURCH

is celebrating 40 years of God's faithfulness!

Former members and friends join us in a feast of thanksgiving on **Oct. 26** and in a joyous service of praise on **Oct. 27, 1991.**
Come taste and see what the Lord has done for us.
For reservations to the special anniversary dinner please write to:

Carol De Vries
6780 Beavercreek Rd., R.R.#1, site 126, C8
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 7L5

Connecting
ECONOMIC$ and Ethics:
Afterthought or Starting Point?

Dr. Bob Goudzwaard,
Professor of Economics
Free University, Amsterdam

Dates and Times
December 2-13, 1991
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Location
Institute for Christian Studies
229 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1R4

Sponsors
ICS
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For more information
Phone ICS at
(416) 979-2331.

Cost Credit $350
Audit $250

Participants may take this course for credit in ICS's Masters Program In Worldview Studies.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT HEALTH COVERAGE

Don't Leave the Country Without Reading This

As of October 1, you will need extra health insurance for medical care outside Canada. Ontario will pay only Ontario rates for most out-of-country health services, including hospital services.

Whether you're a business traveller, a student, a day tripper or a vacationer, the need for *additional health coverage* is more important than ever.

Why is the province making this change?

Ontario's annual payments to American health care institutions have more than doubled in the past three years to over $200 million.

Some of the money saved because of this change will be redirected to enhancing our medicare facilities – ensuring Ontario residents continue to have one of the best health care systems in the world.

For more information about these changes, call this toll-free ministry number: **1-800-268-1154.**

Whether you plan to be out-of-country for half a day or half a year, find out about supplementary health coverage from the private insurer of your choice.

GET COVERAGE BEFORE YOU LEAVE CANADA.

Ministry of Health
Ontario
Ministère de la Santé

Classified

Classified rates

GST Inclusive

Births..... $35.00
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Anniversaries..... $45.00
2-column anniversaries.... $90.00
Obituaries..... $45.00
Notes of thanks..... $35.00
Birthdays..... $35.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $13.50 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $25.00. Letter under file number, $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge. (Free when published with anniversary announcement celebrating 50 years or more.)**Note:** All rates shown above are GST inclusive.

ATTENTION!

a) *Calvinist Contact* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format, *unless you instruct us otherwise.*

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax are *not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Calvinist Contact* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. *Calvinist Contact* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $13.50 per column inch (GST inclusive).

NEWLYWEDS

Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in *Calvinist Contact* will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only $20.00 (GST inclusive)! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose $20.00 and the couple's future address.

Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd.
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (416) 682-8311
Fax: (416) 682-8313

Births

BIL:

We, Clarence and Margaret, are happy to announce the birth of our first grandchild,

JACQUELINE MARLENE

born Aug. 30, 1991.
The happy parents are Terry and Janet Bil.
Jacqueline is the third grandchild of Bruce and Donna Coulson.
We are greatful to the Lord for his faithfulness, and thank him for making everything well.
Home address of Jacqueline: 4537 St. Volodymyr Cresc., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

GROOT-NIBBELINK:

We, Bill and Tena, praise God for answering our prayers and entrusting into our care

NATHANIEL DAVID

born Sept. 21, 1991.
A brother for Sarah Joy.
Grandson for Bernard and Grada Groot-Nibbelink of Bloomfield, Ont., and Robert and Ottina Versteeg of Gorrie, Ont., and great-grandson for Aaltje Van Donkersgoed of Gorrie, Ont.
"Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46: 10).
Home address: R.R. #3, Komoka, ON N0L 1R0

Births

VOORBERG:

Ron and Hilda-Ann thank the Lord for the precious gift of their son

TREVOR WILLIAM

born on Sept. 19, 1991.
A brother for Tracy, Christopher and Vanessa. The proud grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. L.J. Voorberg of Kettleby and Mr. and Mrs. C. Schuurman of Branchton.
Home address: R.R. #1, Kettleby, ON L0G 1J0

Birthday

POORT:

The children of

JANTJE POORT

are very pleased to announce that our Mother and Oma will be celebrating her "80th" birthday on Monday, Oct. 14, 1991.
May the Lord bless her with health and happiness.
Richard & Alida Poort — Woodstock
Peter & Sylvia Vanderlei — Wingham
Peter & Hanna Poort — Ingersoll
Deak & Katie Poort — Ingersoll
Also 12 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.
Open house: Monday, Oct. 14, 1991, from 2-4 p.m. at Covenant Chr. Ref. Church, Lansdowne Ave., Woodstock, Ont.
Home address: #6-361 Devonshire Ave., Woodstock, ON N4S 5P5

Marriage

MEYER-DEKLEER:

With joy and thankful hearts to God, we, Mr. and Mrs. Harold DeKleer of Georgetown, Ont., and Rev. and Mrs. Peter Meyer of Orillia, Ont., are happy to announce the marriage of their son and daughter,

ROB
and
YOLANDA

This celebration will take place, D.V., on Oct. 5, 1991, at 3:00 p.m. in the First Chr. Ref. Church, London, Ont., pastor Peter Meyer, father of the bride officiating.
Future address: 2-138 Waterloo St., London, ON N6B 2M8

Anniversaries

1966 October 14 1991

With praise and thanksgiving to God, we are happy to announce the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents,

GARY and HELEN MANS
(nee Gruppen)

We pray that God will continue to bless you and keep you in his loving care for many more years, for each other and for us.
With love and congratulations from your children:
Arlene & Michael Vansoelen — Wellandport, Ont.
Larry — at home
Home address: R.R. #2, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2

For Rent

Executive, four-bedroom home, two baths, dishwasher, stove, central vac., Florida room, near Smithville Chr. High School, $1,000. plus utilities. Phone: (416) 386-6615.

Business opportunity

Established automotive repair business for lease near **Victoria, B.C.** Growing area. Fully equipped turnkey operation. Modern 2400 sq ft. house included on one acre commercial property. Mail to: 7856 E. Saanich Rd., Saanichton, B.C. V0S 1M0. For more info. call 1 (604) 652-2575.

Anniversaries

Hamilton Caledonia
1951 1991

We thank our heavenly Father that on Oct. 12, 1991, we may celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary with our children, grandchildren, family and friends.

DOUG and DOROTHY REITSMA
(nee Mantel)

Sidney & Sylvia Reitsma
Cor & Liza Reitsma
Gary & Tina Drake
Bert & Tricia Brouwer
Scott & Phyllis Milne
Ron & Sylvia Barrette
Rick & Margaret Boorsma
and 15 grandchildren; our pride and joy!
An open house will be held at the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, York, Ont., on Oct. 12, 1991, from 2-4 p.m.
Home address: Mr. and Mrs. D. Reitsma, 174 McCrae Dr., Box 5286, Caledonia, ON N0A 1A0

1956 October 17 1991

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth" (Ps. 121: 1-2).
With joy and thanksgiving to God, we celebrate the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

JOHAN and MAATJE VAN ELBURG
(nee Bakker)

Love from:
Jenny & Henry Mol — Thunder Bay
Kevin, Robert, Gary, Brian, Derrik
Marianne & Archie Nugteren — Woodstock
Erica, Leah, Lynden
Joanne & Tim Pasma — London
Christopher, Robert, Daniel
Gerald & Tammy Van Elburg — Thunder Bay
Joey
Fred Van Elburg — London
Home address: 423 Oakdale Cres., Thunder Bay, ON P7E 2N2

Obituaries

On Aug. 28, 1991, the Lord in his infinite wisdom and grace took unto himself, in his eternal glory, our beloved brother and uncle

STUART (Sjoert) HUIZENGA

at the age of 79 years. Brother of:
M. Huizenga — the Neth.
J. Huizenga-Stam — the Neth.
A. VanWijk-Huizenga — the Neth.
P.E. Weessies-Huizenga — the Neth.
A. van der Wal-Huizenga — S. Africa
M. Odolphy-Lok — Chatham, Ont.
and nephews and nieces.
Predeceased by two brothers and two sisters. Funeral services were held Friday, Aug. 30, 1991, at the Redeemer Church, Sarnia, Ont., Rev. De Koning officiating.

WILLEM HUTTEN

died on Sept. 18, 1991, at the age of 58, after a lengthy illness.
He was born at Gramsbergen, Overijsel, the Neth., the son of the late Jan and Annigje (Ridderman) Hutten.
He is survived by his wife Anne, sons Bill, Ted, Paul and wife Rosella, and Rob, all of Lakeville; brothers Teunis (and Bertha), the Neth.; John (and Gretha), Centreville; sisters Hennie (and Jack) Gerrits, Sheffield Mills; Diane Plug, Sarnia, Ont.; Karen (and William) DeWaal, Ohio; Anne (and Dave), Burton, Wolfville.
A funeral service, held at the Kentville Baptist Church on Saturday Sept. 21, was based on the text: "The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me" (Ps. 138). The burial was at Lakeview Cemetery with Pastor Peter Stellingwerff and Pastor Elias Mutale officiating.
Donations in memory may be made to the Kentville Chr. Ref. Church building fund.
Correspondence address: R.R.# 1, Kentville, NS B4N 3V7

Obituaries

September 19, 1991

The Lord in his wisdom took unto himself our member

GRACE KORVER

age 86. To her husband and family, we extend our christian sympathy.
Revelations 2:7
Ora et Labora
First Chr. Ref. Church, Lethbridge, Alta.

On Sept. 22, 1991, the Lord took home

ENZY STIENSTRA

of Toronto, Ont. at the age of 60 years.
Brothers and sisters:
Richard (Rev.) & Trudy Stienstra — Dunnville
Joan (predeceased) & Jim Linker — London
Tina Stienstra — Chatham
Peter & Dorothy Stienstra — Chatham
Henry & Tina Stienstra — Chatham
Anne & Tom Riedstra — Norval
Mary & Sander Postma — London
and 19 nieces and nephews.

Kubaard Fr. Smithville, Ont.
April 13, 1919 Sept. 8, 1991

"Let us approach his throne of grace with confidence" (Heb. 4: 16).
On Sept. 8, 1991, the Lord took to be with him,

TRYNTJE (Tina) VAN MARRUM

in her 73rd year.
Lovingly remembered and sadly missed by her husband of 48 years Gerlof Van Marrum and her children:
Frances Crumb — Brantford, Ont.
Clarence Van Marrum — Burlington, Ont.
Frieda & Bill Schurer — Stoney Creek, Ont.
Harry & Annette Van Marrum — St. Anns, Ont.
Ann & Alex Van Rooyen — Woodstock, Ont.
and 15 grandchildren.
Funeral service took place on Sept. 10, 1991, at the Chr. Ref. Church, Smithville, Ont., with Rev. J. DeJong officiating.
Correspondence address: P.O.Box 59, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Zuidland, Z.H. Hepworth, Ont.
July 29, 1909 Sept. 12, 1991

"I hear the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto me and rest.'"
The Lord called home on Sept. 12, 1991, his child

JACOBUS ZEVENBERGEN

in his 83 year.
Loved husband for 60 years of Arendje (nee Vlielander).
Dear father of:
Maartje & John Wolters — Cottam
Coby & Bill Heyns — Owen Sound
John & Jenny Zevenbergen — Hepworth
Arie & Alice Zevenbergen — Hepworth
Audrey & John Neerhof — Chatsworth
Len & Dianne Zevenbergen — Hepworth
Gerda & Don Alexander — Surrey, B.C.
Vida & Bill Dove — Chatsworth
Predeceased by a daughter, Jane, and a son, Maarten.
Dear grandfather of 36 grandchildren and great-grandfather of 28 great-grandchildren.

Funeral service was held at the Chr. Ref. Church, Owen Sound, Ont., on Sept. 16, 1991, with Rev. H. VanderWindt officiating.
I Peter 3: 12A.
Correspondence address: R.R. #1, Hepworth, ON N0H 1P0

Obituaries

"Let us...approach the throne of grace with confidence..." (Heb. 4: 16).
Suddenly, on Sunday morning, Sept. 8, 1991, the Lord called to himself in glory, his child

TINA VAN MARRUM

beloved wife of Gerlof van Marrum for 48 years.
Tina was a dear member of our Sixty Plus Club, of the Chr. Ref. Church in Smithville.
May the God of comfort give our dear member, Gerlof van Marrum and his family, comfort and strength, is the prayer of the members from the Sixty Plusser Club.
The board:
F. Slotman
C. Kuipers
C.H. Rowaan.

Our heavenly Father took home another of his children, our member

WILLEM VAN WIJNGAARDEN

He who loved to speak of his faith in his Saviour Jesus Christ has landed safely on heaven's shore.
That the Lord may comfort his children and grandchildren is the prayer of the members of the "Concordia" senior club of the Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church, Hamilton, Ont.

Teachers

DRAYTON, Ont.: Calvin Chr. School needs a teacher for **Grade 1**, due to a maternity leave. This position will be available from December 1, 1991, until the end of the school year in June 1992. The ability to teach French is an asset. Please forward all inquiries and resumes to: Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel, Principal, Calvin Chr. School, Box 141, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0. Telephone: (519) 638-2935.

JARVIS, Ont.: Jarvis District Chr. School, due to maternity reasons, will be in need of a **Grade 3** teacher for 25 pupils, beginning January 6, 1992. The successful candidate will have the option to continue in this position for the 1992/93 school year.
JDCS consists of 10 classrooms and a total of 15 teachers. If you are interested in joining a group of dedicated and enthusiastic teachers who love teaching, please contact us. All letters of application, resumes and inquiries should be sent prior to November 1, 1991, to: Garry Glasbergen, Principal, Jarvis District Chr. School, Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0, Tel.: (519) 587-4444 (school) or (519) 587-5374 (home).

OSHAWA, Ont.: Immanuel Chr. School, is accepting applications for the position of **teaching principal**, to commence with the 1992/93 school year. Please direct all inquiries and resumes to: Ann Mars, c/o Immanuel Chr. School, 849 Rossland Rd., West, Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4.

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Phone: 1 (904) 589-1323.

Classified/Events

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For sale or rent in **Florida, mobile home,** furnished 12'x60', three bedrooms, two bathrooms plus screen and Florida room. Located in a park, great if you like country living. Near Orlando and all attractions. $13,000 U.S. or rent for $600 U.S. monthly. Call 1 (416) 895-5905.

Personal

Doornenbal family tree dating back to 1692 has been translated into English. If you wish to purchase a copy, contact Dr. Ed Doornenbal, R.R.#1, Site 10, Box 5, Barrhead, AB T0G 0E0 Canada. Phone: (403) 674-3271.

For Sale

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam Madany
($4.95 Canada / $3.95 U.S.). How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind. Also available — essays on Understanding the Middle East ($1.50).

Write:
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Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

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Fax (31) 5120-32324

Teachers

Toronto District Christian High School

invites applications from qualified teachers to fill a position to teach English for approximately 6 months.
The vacancy is due to a maternity leave scheduled to begin in early December.
Please send resumes to the principal:

Wm. Barneveld
377 Woodbridge Ave.
Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8

Help Wanted

Brampton Second Christian Reformed Church
requires a

YOUTH PASTOR
(ordained/unordained)

to develop programs to challenge our youth to active participation in the Christian life.
Education, training and experience in youth ministry are desirable.
Excellent employment and housing benefits will be provided. More information and a church profile are available upon request.
Resumes can be sent to:

the Search Committee, c/o Joe Grootenboer
9 Willis Dr., Brampton, Ontario, L6W 1A8
(416) 450-6796

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

The **First CRC of New Westminster,** an established yet energetic congregation on the west coast, is seeking a **Director of Youth Ministries** to give leadership to our existing young ministry to youth and young adults.
The precise focus to depend on the gifts of the applicant (e.g. music, evangelism, teaching).
Send resume to:

Search Committee,
First CRC of New Westminster,
8255 — 13th Ave., Burnaby, BC V3N 2G6
or call (604) 521-0111

Redeemer College

A Christian University College

invites applications for the following vacancy:

Comptroller

The primary responsibilities in this senior management position involve the supervision of accounting, financial planning, and budget development & control. Secondary responsibilities include the supervision of other related College services. Candidates will have developed strong management and communication skills in an institutional setting, possess a professional accounting designation, and be committed to the Reformed Christian basis of the College. Familiarity with "Fund Accounting" will be considered an asset. Applications or inquiries, rèsumes, and references are to be directed to the **Human Resources Director** and will be considered until the position is filled.

In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Ancaster, Ontario L96 3N6 (416) 648-2131

Miscellaneous

REFORMED BIBLE COLLEGE

is prescribed to be a **"university outside Canada the student body of which ordinarily includes students from Canada."**

Call (616) 363-2050

Help Wanted

Redeemer College

A Christian University College

invites applications for a

Dean of Students

commencing July 1, 1992

Reporting directly to the President, this person is expected to provide vision and leadership for the Student Life Department, which includes supervising a comprehensive program of student services. Requirements include a Master's degree in a related field; demonstrated leadership ability; work experience in student services in a post-secondary environment preferred; commitment in word and deed to living a life that reflects the biblical, Reformed Christian basis of the College. Inquiries or applications, rèsumes, and references are to be directed to the **Human Resources Director** and will be considered until the position is filled.

In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Ancaster, Ontario L96 3N6 (416) 648-2131

Events

Eighth Annual Senior Citizen's Day at Redeemer College

Thursday, October 31, 1991
Beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Dr. Gene Haas, Assistant Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer College, will address you in the morning. His topic will be based on I Corinthians 9 and is titled: "Slaves of Christ".
Redeemer College Students will entertain you in the afternoon with mime and music.

Lunch: $7.50 per person
Please register now,
Phone (416) 648-2131

Redeemer College — *A Christian University College*
Ancaster, Ontario L9G 3N6 (416) 648-2131

40th ANNIVERSARY

The **Maple Ridge, B.C. (formerly Haney B.C.) Christian Reformed Church** hopes to celebrate its **40th anniversary** on **November 2nd, 1991.**

We are thankful to our heavenly Father for the many blessings he has bestowed upon us during all these years. We would like to invite all former members and friends of our congregation to celebrate this festive occasion with us.

We will have **open house from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.**, followed by a **dinner at 5.00 p.m.** On **November 3rd at 10.00 a.m.** we will have a special **commemorative church service**, followed by a coffee social.

For more info. please write to our church office at:

P.O.Box 94, Maple Ridge, BC V2X 7E9
or
phone Mrs. Alida Kruk at (604) 465-6095

For former members who will be unable to come we have some very nice souvenir items available.

Events

WE ARE PLANNING A TRIP TO

INDONESIA

i.e. Java, Bali, Minahassa, for a group of 20 in the spring of 1992.
If interested, please contact Hans or Corrie Meiboom,
R.R. #2, Box 15 RA, Carrying Place, ON K0K 1L0
Phone: 1 (613) 392-8821.

ISRAEL

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Masada - and many other places

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World Home Bible League
Box 524, Station A
Weston, ON M9N 3N3
(416) 741-2140

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the Windmill

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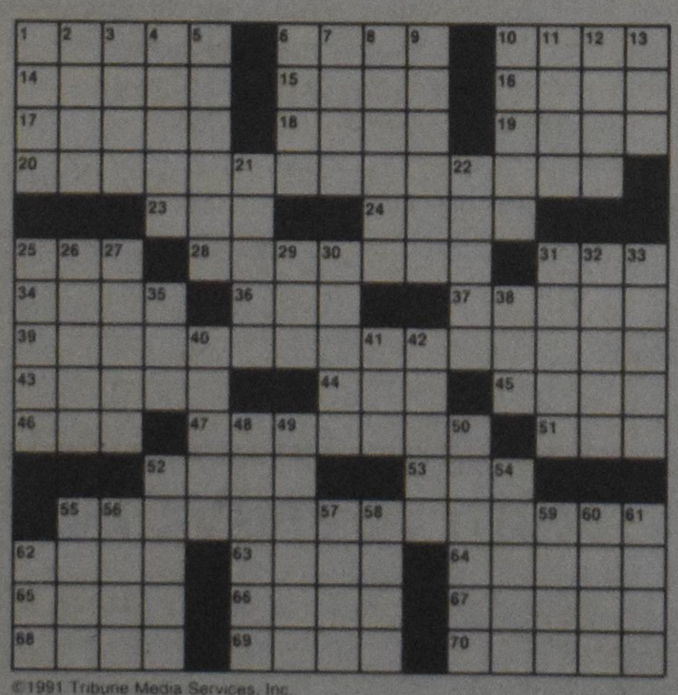
Western Canada: P.O. Bag 9033, Surrey, BC, V3T 4X3
USA: P.O. Box 591, Lynden, WA 98264
Telephone: **(604)597-2144** (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Weekly puzzle

by Stanley B. Whitten



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ACROSS
1 Garbo
6 Electric units
10 Stimulus
14 Position in yoga
15 Light tune
16 Feed the kitty
17 Muscovites
18 Sharif of bridge
19 Article
20 Ripley's admonition
23 Dernier —
24 — out (supplements)
25 River to the North Sea
28 Trampled
31 Night clothes for short
34 Fountain offering
36 Before cure or tome
37 Approximately
39 Washington to his dad
43 Gambling game
44 Oolong
45 Human or relay
46 Comp. pt.
47 Uprisings
51 Claret or crimson
52 Annapolis letters
53 Secreted
55 Long-running TV quiz show
62 Liquid measure
63 Inter —
64 Kayak kin
65 Major ending
66 Penny
67 Suppose
68 Destitute
69 Judgment
70 Distributed

DOWN
1 Smooth and easy
2 Wander
3 And others: Lat.
4 Loose garment
5 Declare
6 Century plant
7 Puccini heroine
8 Overlaid with metal
9 Rowing position
10 Aches
11 Golden Rule word
12 Printer's term
13 Garment border
21 Songbird
22 Of the kidneys
25 Novelist Zola
26 City in the Peach State
27 List of candidates
29 Choose
30 Duplicate
31 Type of bear
32 Electricity
33 High-spirited horse
35 Explosive letters
38 Saloon
40 Scandinavian
41 Conger
42 Shaping machine
48 Intertwine
49 — Forge
50 TV series type
52 Express
54 Hang with folded cloth
55 Josip Broz
56 Hip
57 Prong
58 Chapeaux
59 Military group
60 Musical sound
61 Pay attention
62 Vigor

Last week's puzzle

T	A	S	S	E	■	P	O	D	■	S	T	A	R	K
O	D	I	U	M	■	E	N	E	■	E	R	N	I	E
W	A	X	M	U	S	E	U	M	■	R	E	D	D	Y
I	T	E	■	L	A	P	S	E	■	R	A	C	E	S
T	E	S	T	A	T	E	■	R	I	A	T	A	■	■
■	■	■	I	T	E	R	■	I	S	T	■	N	A	Y
L	I	O	N	E	S	S	■	T	R	E	A	D	L	E
I	D	L	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	U	L	A	N
M	E	D	D	L	E	S	■	S	C	O	R	E	R	S
O	A	F	■	A	T	A	■	P	A	P	A	■	■	■
■	■	L	O	Y	A	L	■	I	R	E	L	A	N	D
S	L	A	V	E	■	A	P	R	O	N	■	M	I	I
C	O	M	E	T	■	B	A	I	L	I	W	I	C	K
A	L	E	R	T	■	L	I	T	■	C	A	C	H	E
T	A	S	T	E	■	E	N	S	■	E	R	I	E	S

Calendar of Events

Oct. 5	Harvest Festival Auction, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Hillside Gardens (Rupke Rd. west of Hwy. 400, north of Hwy. 9). Proceeds to **Holland Marsh** District Christian School. Door prize: a trip to Holland from DCA/Wereld Contact Travel!
Oct. 8	Organ concert by Jonathan Oldengarm, at 12:15 p.m., St. James Cathedral (Anglican), **Toronto**, Ont.
Oct. 9	Organ concert by Jonathan Oldengarm, at 12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Church (Anglican), **Toronto**, Ont.
Oct. 9	RCBPO (Hamilton/Wentworth Chapter) meets at 7:45 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. For info. call (416) 524-1203.
Oct. 9 - 17	Emmeloord Christian Male Choir with organist Klaas Jan Mulder in concert. All events start at 8 p.m. **Oct. 9:** Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby**, Ont.; **Oct. 10:** Dundas St. Centre United Church, **London**, Ont.; **Oct. 11:** Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont.; **Oct. 12:** St. Paul's Anglican Church, **Toronto**, Ont.; **Oct. 16:** St. George's Anglican Church, **Guelph**, Ont.; **Oct. 17:** Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont.
Oct. 10	Public forum at 8 p.m., Ewart Angus Hall 1A6, McMaster University, **Hamilton**, Ont. Sponsored by McMaster University Chaplaincy. Speakers: Dr. Paul A. Marshall and Mr. Harry Kitts.
Oct. 12-13	Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Ottawa Christian School, **Ottawa**, Ont. For info. call (613) 722-5836.
Oct. 13	Organ concert by John Wm. Vandertuin, 8 p.m., St. Andrew's Presb. Church, **Ottawa**, Ont.
Oct. 17	Fall rally of the Can. Fed. of Chr. Ref. Women, 10 a.m., First CRC, Tweedsmuir Ave., **Chatham**, Ont. Speakers: Rev. Anthony De Jager from Sarnia, and Mr. Bert Witvoet from St. Catharines. Admission $3.00. Bring your own lunch!
Oct. 18-19	Klaas Jan Mulder (organist) in concert. **Oct. 18:** 8 p.m., Providence CRC, **Beamsville**, Ont.; **Oct. 19:** 8 p.m., Central Pres. Church (Caroline & Charlton), **Hamilton**, Ont.
Oct. 18-20	M2/W2 dinners focussing on healing the wounds of crime. **Oct. 18:** Edmonton Chr. High, **Edmonton**, Alta.; **Oct. 19:** Dalhousie MB Community Church, **Calgary**, Alta.; **Oct. 20:** Gem Community Hall, **Gem**, Alta. All events start at 6.30 p.m.
Oct. 19	"Netherlands Bazaar" from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. at the Thornhill Community Centre, **Thornhill**, Ont. Crafts, baking flowers, white-elephants, restaurant. Admission free. All proceeds to needy families of Dutch descent in Ontario. For info. contact Bets Speelman (416) 742-1172.
Oct. 19	All-Ontario Diaconal Conference at John Knox Chr. School, **Brampton**, Ont. 16 workshops and 15 seminars. Call (416) 646-4511 for a registration form.
Oct. 2-22	Concert tour by Willem van Suijdam (organist), Bert Koelewyn (piano), Herman and Henk-Jan Drost (trumpets). All events start at 8 p.m. **Oct. 2: CRC, Burnaby**, B.C. ; **Oct. 3:** Trinity CRC, **Abbotsford**, B.C.; **Oct. 4:** CRC, **Kelowna**, B.C.; **Oct. 5: West End CRC, Edmonton**, Alta.; **Oct. 7:** Can. Ref. Church, **Neerlandia**, Alta.; **Oct. 8:** Maranatha CRC, **Lethbridge**, Alta.; **Oct. 9:** Can. Ref. Church, **Carman**, Man.: **Oct. 10;** First CRC, **Thunderbay**, Ont.; **Oct. 12:** Maranatha CRC **Bowmanville**, Ont.; **Oct. 14:** Christ Church Cathedral (8:30 p.m.), **Hamilton**, Ont.; **Oct. 15:** Can. Ref. Church, **Attercliffe**, Ont.; **Oct. 16:** Westmount CRC, **Strathroy**, Ont.; **Oct. 17:** Can. Ref. Church, **Fergus**, Ont.; **Oct. 18:** Maranatha CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont.; **Oct. 19:** Second CRC, **Brampton**, Ont.; **Oct. 22:** Can. Ref. Church, **Thornhill**, Ont.
Oct. 23	Fall rally of the Bowmanville region of Chr. Ref. Ladies' Societies. At 10 a.m., Hope CRC, **Port Perry**, Ont. Speakers: Rev. Karl House and Mrs. Caroline Cave.
Oct. 23-26	Organ concerts by Andre Knevel. **Oct. 23:** First CRC, **New Westminster**, B.C.; **Oct. 24:** Can. Ref. Church, **Smithers**, B.C.; **Oct. 25:** Maranatha Can. Ref. Church, **Surrey**, B.C.; **Oct. 26:** Can. Ref. Church, **Abbotsford**, B.C. All events at 8 p.m.
Oct. 26	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Woodstock**, Ont. With Rev. Juan Boonstra and The St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir.
Oct. 26	1991 Holy Spirit Conference, Kennedy Rd. Kennedy Rd. Tabernacle, **Brampton**, Ont. Registration at 9 a.m. For info. call (416) 270-4026.
Oct. 26-27	40th Anniversary celebrations of the CRC, **Port Alberni**, B.C. (For details see C.C., Oct. 4/91)
Oct. 26	Christian Rainbows meets at 10 a.m., CRC, **Ingersoll**, Ont. Theme: "Obtaining housing and support services for the psychiatrically disabled." To register call (416) 639-1075.
Oct. 26-27	40th Anniversary of Chr. Ref. Church, **Exeter**, Ont. **Oct. 26:** entertaining program at Exeter Public School; **Oct. 27:** special worship services at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. For info. call (519) 235-0941.
Oct. 31	Eighth Annual Senior Citizens' Day, 9:30 a.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Gene Haas. Entertainment in the afternoon. Lunch is $7.50 p.p. Register now at (416) 648-2131.

McMaster University Chaplaincy

extends an invitation to attend a

PUBLIC FORUM

Theme: *Living with our Differences: Justice and Politics in a Pluralist Society*

Thursday, Oct. 10, 1991, at 8 p.m.
Ewart Angus Hall 1A6
McMaster University

Dr. Paul A. Marshall, Prof. of Political Theory, Inst. for Chr. Studies
Mr. Harry Kitts, Executive Director, Citizens for Public Justice

For more information, feel free to call:
Rev. Aren Geisterfer at
(416) 525-9140, ext. 4123 (work)
(416) 524-0488 (home)

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Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls received

— To Trinity, Abbotsford, B.C., Rev. Gerrit Veeneman of Fruitland, Ont.

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Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Ellul's philosophy of technology

The Technological Bluff, by Jacques Ellul; translated from the French by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Mich.; William B. Eerdmans, 1990. Softcover, 416 pp., $32.45. Reviewed by Michael Van Wijk, Ottawa.

In this fascinating study, Ellul, professor emeritus of law and of the sociology and history of institutions at the University of Bordeaux, France, surveys the ills of this world, especially those of France. He finds their root in modern technology, particularly in nuclear, space, and computer technology.

While these technologies *promise* freedom, progress and happiness, in reality they bring us slavery, profound dislocation and anxiety in a culture increasingly dominated by technocrats. According to Ellul, these techno-crafts form the real power elite, who tell governments what to do, the economy where to invest, the schools and universities what to teach and the consumers what to buy. Their promises of freedom, progress and happiness are intimidating as well as deceptive. These promises are the "technological bluff."

Nations that do not follow the directives of technocrats will lose out in the race for increased productivity, will become uncompetitive and experience large-scale unemployment. Ellul illustrates his thesis with many fascinating examples which have a ring of truth and which we easily recognize. His purpose is to unmask this bluff.

Doesn't deliver as promised

In Part I of his study, Ellul argues that technical progress raises more and greater problems than it solves; that its harmful effects are inseparable from its beneficial effects; that the harmful effects are often unpredictable and unforeseeable. Further, he says that modern technology has its limits in its enormous capital investment requirements, which force choices, as well as in its fragility of vulnerability to equipment breakdown and terrorist acts.

In Part II Ellul asserts that technology and culture are incompatible, that human mastery over technology is impossibie and that technology is fully autonomous.

Part III deals with the absurdity of technical progress, its costs, its gadgets, the waste it generates and the bluff of increased productivity with its requirement of increased consumption to compensate for increasing unemployment.

Information overload

In Part IV we find further discussions on the technological bluff relating to overwhelming overload of information; on television and global computer networks; on the role of advertising as the driving force behind technology; and on diversions, such as computer and video games, sports, the automobile and computer arts (inlcuding rock music), and the ultimate idiocy of Euro-Disneyland.

What to say of all this? Ellul has a strange concept of *technique*, which he defines as: the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency in every field of human activity. His translator leaves this French word untranslated. This concept reduces the technical *objects* to technical *method* and leaves the norms for technology as a human normative activity unexamined.

No norms

The word "norm" appears only once in his book, and then only in passing-in connection with "normalization." Ellul lacks insight into technical norms that place limits on technology. As a result, his *technique* is a vague concept that covers all human activity, including pedagogy.

Ellul does not know technology from the inside and raises objections as an outsider, especially against the loss of human freedom, which in this study also becomes a normless concept. Of course, when norms are ignored and human responsibility for technical forming is eliminated, human freedom diminishes and technology takes on the pretension of an independent power.

There is no doubt that this has been happening increasingly and on a large scale, of which Ellul's study provides many powerful illustrations. Having eliminated norms from his concept of *technique*, however, Ellul is not in a position to offer a real way out of its pretended autonomy and that of the technocratic power elite.

Yet in his fulminations against a technology gone awry, Ellul reminds us indirectly of norms against which this development must be judged. That is the strength of this book. That these norms are not explicitly examined, is its weakness.

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Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Foundations

"The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved" (Ps. 93:1).

Aristotle has been called the "Father of Science." He lived in Athens nearly 2,500 years ago but his powers of observation and his reasoning abilities were as fine as anything Sherlock Holmes displayed under the pen of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Aristotle dissected over 50 animals to find out how they operated from the inside out. He described in great detail the characteristics and habits of over 500 species living in his corner of the world. And most of the time his accuracy amazes modern scientists.

Of course, Aristotle could be wrong at times. For instance, he thought that meat left to itself would spontaneously generate maggots. He was also certain that the function of the brain was to cool the body's blood, much like the radiator in a car. And he believed that earthquakes were caused by air trying to escape from the interior of the earth.

Shake, rattle and roll

If Aristotle had been right about earthquakes, then Earth would have known some major "blowouts" throughout history. The one that struck Tangshan, China, in 1976 registered 8.3 on the open-ended Richter scale and killed more than 300,000 people. It generated as much energy as a 100-megaton hydrogen bomb.

And that one wasn't even the worst in history. Twice, since recording devices charted the inner turmoil of the earth, there have been measurements of 8.9 on the Richter scale, one in Ecuador (1906) and once in Japan (1933). That's like 15,000 Hiroshima bombs or 300,000,000 tons of TNT!

Survival

Communities in earthquake zones would love to have "no fault" insurance. But life isn't so simple. After a 1923 earthquake leveled Tokyo, city planners demanded new structures for buildings, and deep foundations that could withstand earth's shudders which would shift the surface. Now they're even planning new "low-rises" — huge living and working complexes that would be dug into the ground like rabbit dens. Two Japanese corporations already have government financing for developing huge underground cities that would accommodate 100,000 people or more with a full range of living quarters, offices, theatres, libraries, sports centres and the like. It's one way to get down to the "foundations of the earth," and seek safety from earthquakes.

Ancient peoples, of course, didn't have the technology for such a venture. They were left to prayer and superstition to protect themselves. When workers repaired Japan's famous Edo Castle following the 1923 earthquake they found a group of human skeletons crunched beneath the foundation stones. The Shoguns of former generations believed that buildings constructed on human flesh would never fall, either to enemy or to earthquake. So dozens of slaves knelt in prayer, were showered with gold coins, and then were pressed to death under the weight of large boulders which eventually bore the weight of the castle walls.

Best insurance in the world

Though we have long ago left such superstitions behind, we still know that the Japanese were on the right track. Earth's foundations stand, in spite of every shaking and quaking. The psalmist celebrated that fact in Psalm 93. He knew that God who created earth, the God who sheltered earth, the God who held the seas in their places and restrained the winds of the storms.

In the end, says the psalmist, you can be sure that earth will never shake apart. After all, the One who made the earth is the same One who made a Covenant of Trust with his people on earth (vs. 5). And come to think of it, he confirmed it in the death of one who became a servant and slave (Phil. 2: 5-11), and was crushed beneath the foundations on which we now rest secure (I Pet. 2: 4-8).

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.